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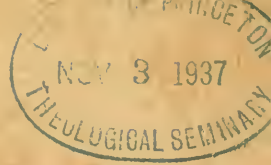
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SERMONS

BY THE

REVEREND GEORGE BUIST, D. D.

MINISTER OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

AND PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE

OF

CHARLESTON, SOUTH-CAROLINA.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

NEW-YORK:

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By D. & G. Bruce.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE volumes of *Sermons*, of the *Rev. Dr. Buist*, are presented to the publick, principally, at the request of the general body of his friends and congregation.

The reverend authour had, frequently, expressed his intention, to those with whom he was particularly intimate, of publishing a selection of his *Sermons*, whenever he should find leisure, from his many avocations, to prepare them for the press.

The hand of death arrested the execution of this design; and the partiality of friends has done, thus feebly, what *Dr. Buist* would have effected in the most able manner. The love and esteem of his numerous and respectable congregation coincided with the affectionate regard of his friends. They could not consent to separate themselves for ever from the christian advice and consolation to which they had, so often, listened with comfort and delight; and as they could, no longer, enjoy these from the pulpit of *Dr. Buist*, they ardently wished to be able to read,

in their families and in retirement, discourses to which they had always listened with satisfaction.

Those to whom the selection for the publick has been committed, are aware, that there are many errors given in these volumes to the world, as Dr. Buist's, for which they alone are responsible. They trust, that every allowance will be made for a posthumous work ; for the difference between a copy used by the preacher for his text, and the delivery itself ; for deficiencies, supplied in the course of exhortation, from the exuberance of the mind ; in short, for the many blemishes, which the authour, who knew his whole ground, was adequate to turn into beauties.

It is to be lamented, that the reverend authour had not lived to prepare a selection of his Sermons for publication ; they would have been worthy of any man. His friends now give these to the world, trusting that they will be useful, knowing that they cannot but be interesting ; and, as they are addressed to christians, they hope that christian charity will cover all their infirmities, and christian knowlege supply all their deficiencies.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
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LIFE OF THE AUTHOUR.

THE Reverend GEORGE BUIST, D. D. was born in the year 1770, in Fifeshire, in Scotland. He entered the college of Edinburgh in 1787, where the early indications of superior genius acquired him the applause and friendship of some of the first literary characters of the age ; among others, were the celebrated names of Dr. Robertson, the historian, Dr. Hugh Blair, and Professour Dalziel. They regarded him as one of the chief ornaments of the college, and as destined to exalt the reputation of his country.

Being intended for the clerical profession, Mr. Buist pursued the study of theology with unremitted assiduity ; but, being of a liberal and comprehensive mind, he did not confine himself to his profession exclusively. He knew that the sciences and arts are mutual aids to each other, and that an acquaintance with all is the way to perfect a knowledge of

any one particular branch of human learning. In classical learning he was, at an early age, profoundly versed. For Grecian literature he had an especial predilection; and it is a fact well known to many of his friends, that he was an assistant to Professour Dalziel in preparing a part of his *Collectanea* for the press. With the Hebrew he was familiar, and he was critically skilled in the French and Italian languages. His knowledge embraced all those departments of learning that make up the liberal scholar, and there was no branch of philosophy, criticism, history, or various literature, in which he was not, either profoundly or competently skilled.

In the year 1792, Mr. Buist was admitted an honourary member of the Edinburgh Philological Society, and about that time, he published an abridgment of Hume's History of England, for the use of schools, which was extremely well received, and passed through two editions. He also furnished some important articles for the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

While the fame of Mr. Buist was thus extending itself in the literary world, the elders of the Presbyterian church of Charleston, S. C. who had lately been deprived of their pastor,

addressed the Rev. Mr. Hewit, who had formerly been their minister, the Rev. Dr. Robertson, principal of the university of Edinburgh, and the Rev. Dr. Hugh Blair, soliciting their agency and assistance in procuring a supply for their church. Mr. Hewit being absent, Doctors Robertson and Blair willingly complied with this request and made choice of Mr. Buist, whom they introduced to the church in a letter of the 8th March, 1793, from which the following is an extract :

“ After much inquiry and several consultations, we have pitched upon Mr. George Buist, preacher of the gospel. We are both acquainted with him, and know him to be a good scholar, an instructive preacher, well bred, and of a good natural temper. We have no doubt but he will prove an acceptable minister to the congregation, as well as an agreeable member of society.”

Mr. Buist arrived in Charleston in June, 1793, and immediately entered upon the duties of his ministry. On the 27th of March in the following year, he was honoured by the college of Edinburgh with the degree of doctor of divinity, being then in the 24th year of his age.

Dr. Buist exercised his ministerial functions with honour to himself and with satisfaction and delight to his congregation. The impressive manner of his delivery, and the salutary advice of his discourses, powerfully interested and affected his hearers.

In the year 1805 Dr. Buist was appointed by the trustees of the Charleston college to be principal of that institution. For this situation he was eminently qualified, both on account of his excellent classical learning and his accurate and steady ideas of college discipline. Under him the college attained to a respectability it had never before acquired, and it would, doubtless, have become much more eminent and useful, if the death of the principal had not involved the institution, in common with the country at large, in mournful lamentation.

Dr. Buist departed this life on the 31st of August, 1808, after an illness of a few days, in the midst of his usefulness, and in the prime of his life, being then in the 39th year of his age.

It may be, truly, said that death has not, for many years, struck a more shining or useful character in Charleston than Dr. Buist.

Amiable and domestick in private life, he was indefatigable in all enterprises of publick utility. No man was more able to rouse the general feeling in behalf of any scheme for the general good. Industrious, warm and eloquent in his appeals, and measuring the character and the prepossessions of every individual, he touched those whom he wished to influence so forcibly and so happily that he disarmed resentment, quickened indifference, and either gained the hearts and wishes of all, or succeeded in silencing noisy and obtrusive opposition. By the happy application of such active address, united to his prudence and intelligence, Dr. Buist could not fail to render himself useful as a publick-spirited member of society. Those who knew him can well recollect, in how many instances society at large has been benefited by his exertion.

As pastor of a congregation, Dr. Buist was the friend and father of all its members. In their spiritual and temporal concerns he was a willing and able adviser; ever ready to hear the story of affliction and to dispense comfort and aid to all that were troubled and cast down. He was bold and animated in his censure of vice, not regarding the si-

tuation nor rank of any who had grossly offended ; to the virtuous he was open and sincere, and united them to him by the cords of affection. Liberal in his sentiments, he did not look for christian excellence only in the pale of his own church ; he acknowledged and cherished it wherever it was to be found, and greeted it as being of the kingdom of Jesus. The merit of the humble he strove to make conspicuous, and the virtues of the more exalted he delighted to blazon for the sake of holding up impressive examples to the world, and of reminding those who contemn homely duties, that, the brightest ornaments of the human character are not those which dazzle with their glare, but those which shed the benign light that chastens the soul with the benevolence whose source and spring is in the bosom of God.

The esteem of his congregation was a decisive proof of the excellency of heart that characterized Dr. Buist, and his popularity as a preacher sufficiently evince the soundness of his doctrines and the eloquence of his delivery. His judgment was strong and accurate. He seized a subject with the nervous grasp of an original genius, and he embellished it with

the chastest decorations of the fancy. His manner was that of an orator ; his language was bold, flowing and ardent ; he addressed every faculty and appealed to every feeling in behalf of the holy gospel of Christ ; and as a minister of his word, he either solicited with tenderness the contrite and humble to approach the courts of the temple, or spoke to the obdurate “ of righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come,” and pictured the calamitous state of the rejected of God with such force and such vivid imagery, that, like the great apostle of the gentiles, he was of power to make “ Felix tremble.”

A collection of the Rev. Doctor's Sermons, revised and corrected by himself, would have exhibited many proofs of his excellence as a preacher : it is hoped, that what are now given to the publick, even with all the disadvantages that attend them, are yet adorned with specimens that will illustrate and do honour to the talents of their authour. But the fame of Dr. Buist can now live in its full blaze only in the recollection of those who were familiar with his preaching ; all recorded beauties of his mind fling but a feeble light from the dread gloom of that grave where lie the mouldered

remains of him, who, while living, charmed and enlightened.

The ways of providence are so often mysterious and inscrutable to man, that we are tempted to arraign the dispensations of God as hard and unpitying. But he maketh light to arise to the upright of darkness. He dwelleth in the cloudy temples, but truth illumines the courts of his palace. Darkness is his pavilion, but mercy and justice are his handmaids. The paths of his glory are often invisible to mortals, but faith makes manifest the secret ways, and hope extends the hand of friendly consolation to those who resign, with christian humility, the best of gifts into the keeping of him who is the great giver of all good.*

* Dr. Buist was married after his settlement in this country, to Miss Somers, a lady of Carolina, who survives her husband. He left five children.

SERMON I.

*On the importance and novelty of the truths
taught by Jesus Christ.*

JOHN, CHAP. 18, VER. 38.

"Pilate saith unto him, What is Truth? And when he had said this, he went out again."

THIS was not the first time that this question was proposed, but it was the first time that it was proposed to one who could give it any satisfactory answer. TRUTH had engaged the attention of mankind in every age and in every nation; and it was the professed object of the inquiries of the heathen priests and the ancient philosophers. But, although they were thus unanimous in considering truth to be a great and proper object of human pursuit, their methods of inquiry were so opposite, their conclusions were so contradictory, their

researches were so fruitless, that, before the time of Jesus, mankind may be said, rather, to have evinced a desire of knowing the truth, than to have made any progress in this knowledge. Man, indeed, fallen and degraded as he was, had lost that excellence of understanding which originated in his resemblance to his Maker. A weakness had pervaded the mental powers which prevented them from soaring to those sublime heights where truth dwells, pure and unsullied by the errors of human imperfection. This weakness was most conspicuous in matters of morality and religion. In other sciences, some progress had been made, some truths had been discovered, but the Author of our existence, our relations as moral agents and religious beings, our present state, and our future prospects, in a great measure, still lay hid in darkness. A revelation from God was necessary, that light might arise on this benighted part of the truth: A messenger from the fountain of wisdom must be sent to guide into truth those who had so long wandered in the paths of error: and God, pitying the ignorance of his children, at length commissioned his Son Jesus to be the publisher of the truth to men. Thus he says

himself, in the verse immediately preceding the text; “to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.”

It was upon hearing this declaration from Jesus, of the design of his mission, that Pilate proposed this celebrated question, “What is truth?” Had he, fully, developed his thoughts upon this subject, perhaps he would have expressed the ideas which prevailed in his mind, in the following language. “Truth,” would he have said, “is a word in the mouths of every body: the thing itself still wanders at large, and unacknowledged. All men pretend to be acquainted with it; but none have been able to give a proper account of it. You, too, pretend to bear witness to the truth: first determine what it is. If you know no more of the matter than the learned men of my own country (Pilate was a Roman governour) your pretensions are vain; for all their knowledge consists in the most vague and uncertain reasoning; in the most subtle and endless disputes. And what truths can you, a mean and illiterate Jew, have discovered, of which the philosophers of Greece and Rome, or even your own

“prophets and wise men are yet ignorant?” Perhaps, then, we shall have given the chief part of the answer to Pilate’s question, if we state the most important of those religious truths which Jesus Christ has made known to the world, and with which men were, formerly, unacquainted.

I. Those truths which relate to the *being*, *attributes*, and *worship* of God, are the first class of truths, of which the knowledge has been confirmed, enlarged, and improved by Jesus Christ. Not, indeed, that any nation were until that time entirely ignorant of the existence of a power who created and governed all things. This, nature, throughout all her works, proclaims in loud and unequivocal language: and it required but a very small effort of reason to see God in the living verdure of the fields, to hear him in the thunder, and to discern his workings in the succession of days, and the revolution of seasons. But, while they acknowledged his being, they were strangers to his perfections; his unity, his omnipresence, his power, his justice, his goodness, his holiness, and his wisdom. Those many Gods whom their own imaginations had created, were weak, local, and dependent be-

ings; delighting in cruelty, addicted to the indulgence of every appetite and passion, stained with pollution and with crimes. It could not, then, be expected that the worship of heathens should be of a very exalted nature. For, it was not inconsistent to believe, that beings, of whom they had formed such low and unworthy notions, would delight in the grossest idolatry, would be pleased with the meanest superstition, and the most obscene rioting in their worshippers; and would accept of the fruit of their body for the sin of their soul. Were it, now, the proper time and place to illustrate and prove these assertions by an induction of particular facts, the deplorable situation of the heathens, with respect to the knowledge of the nature of God, and the worship which is due to him, would abundantly appear. But, let us pass on to the idea which the religion of Jesus gives us of the Supreme Being: and we will immediately see how much we are indebted to him for a knowledge of this truth. Jesus, indeed, pretends not to *prove* the existence of God. This, properly speaking, every religion must take for granted: for, as St. Paul says, it is impossible to come unto God, without believ-

ing that he is. But his character, and the worship which he requires his rational offspring to pay unto him, are exhibited in the gospel alone, in their true and proper light. He is there represented as One infinite Being, most pure and spiritual, most sovereign and omnipotent, most holy and just, most wise and merciful, as the creator and governour of all things, as of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, as of stricter justice than to pardon the guilty, but at the same time as willing to receive the penitent into favour.

The worship which the gospel inculcates as due to God, corresponds with the sublime idea which it gives us of his perfections. Whereas the superstition of the heathens changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Jesus taught, that, God was a *Spirit*, and, that they who worship him ought to worship him in spirit and in truth : that he took no delight in burnt offerings and incense, but in the offering of a pure heart, and the simple incense of prayer and praise.

These truths, it must be confessed, were not altogether *new*. Though they were taught,

most clearly, by Jesus, the world was not wholly ignorant of them before his appearance. God had, at sundry times, and in various ways, revealed himself unto men by his prophets. Under the preparatory dispensation, his unity, his omnipresence, his power, and his justice were fully known. But, even, under that dispensation, his milder attributes were hid or obscured by that severe and strict justice with which he was always attended. There he appeared in terrour and awful majesty: in the gospel we see him clothed in robes of mercy and compassion. In the Old Testament, he is styled “the Lord of hosts,” “the great and terrible God:” in the New, he is called the “God of peace and love, of patience and consolation.” When the Law was given from Sinai, the mountain burned with fire, and there was blackness and darkness and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard, entreated that the word should not be spoken unto them any more. When God commanded all men to hear Jesus, he displayed himself in the mildest and most engaging light, and gave an emblematical representation of the nature of the religion which was now to be introduced,

by opening the heavens, and causing the Spirit to descend in the manner of a dove upon his beloved Son. This difference between the characters of the Old and New Testaments is so striking that the most ancient hereticks* believed that they did not proceed from the same author, and supposed the existence of two principles; the one, fierce and cruel, who was the God of the Old Testament, the other, good, merciful, and benign, from whom proceeded the new dispensation.

Besides, the worship of the Jews (which God commanded, not as absolutely proper in itself, but because of their hardness of heart, stupidity, and ignorance, and because it was best adapted to the weak and infant state of their knowledge of God) was, in the highest degree, corporeal and sensual. It consisted principally of ceremonies, oblations, and washings, which could be of no account with the Father of Spirits. Nor was this all; in Jerusalem alone could this worship be paid. The temple, the altar, the visible representation of divine glory which overhung the mercy seat, and many other parts of the Jewish economy all tended to lead their minds to consider God

* The Gnosticks.

as a local deity, confined to the descendants of Jacob, and the land of Judea. The messengers of the Most High, it is true, were at pains to correct these ideas, and to recall their thoughts from the objects of sense, about which they were so much conversant, to the spiritual things which were typified by them. But Jesus alone completely dispelled those mistaken notions about the nature and worship of God, to which even his favourite people were held in bondage, by abolishing that economy and worship of which they were the necessary consequence; by introducing a dispensation purely spiritual, by teaching men that the worship of God was not connected with time or place, that he was not confined to temples made with hands, but that the universe was his temple, and that at every time, and in every place, the sincere worshipper might turn, and reverence, and adore.

II. The next class of truths which Jesus published to the world, (we may say, without exception, for the first time) are those which regard the condition of man, and his reconciliation to God. To the most superficial inquirer, who looked abroad into the world, it must have been evident, that some great disas-

ter had befallen the human race, that man was fallen from a high estate, and that all his attainments, now, were only the recovery of what had been lost in the universal wreck. This all men, before the time of Jesus, felt and believed. But they went no farther, for they had no principles whereon to proceed. Imagination supplied them with the rest, and the allegorical fictions of a golden and an iron age appeared to them a sufficient account of the former state, and the present degeneracy of mankind. They were ignorant of the extent of the evil; the manner of its introduction; the possibility and method of recovery from it: they knew not whether it was in our power to deliver ourselves, or whether there was a necessity for the interposition and assistance of another and superiour agency. For though they offered sacrifices, and practised innumerable rites and ceremonies in their worship, with a design to appease and render propitious the Deity, yet all this originated from tradition, and indicated noknowledge of their true nature, use and intention. Indeed, it was absolutely impossible that they could ever discover the means by which they could procure the favour and acceptance of God, or regain

that perfection of nature which they had lost. In this fundamental inquiry, they had no light to their feet, nor lamp to their path. For, as it depended upon the good pleasure and will of God, it could not possibly be known without a revelation. Who hath been admitted into the secrets of the Most High? Who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor?

But this mystery, hid from ages and generations, was made manifest by the Son of God. In the gospel we are informed of the disease under which we labour, and the remedy which God has provided for us, in his wisdom and grace. We are told, that man at his formation was placed in a state of perfection and innocence, but, that by the abuse of that liberty of choice which was interwoven with his frame, he has degraded himself into a state of the utmost wretchedness and guilt: that all men are now dead in trespasses and sins, and alienated in their minds from God by wicked works: and that they are incapable of delivering themselves, or indeed of doing any thing acceptable to God, or blameless in his sight. Revelation, likewise, discovers to us, that the iniquities of men have separated them and

their God, and blocked up that intercourse which formerly took place between heaven and earth: that God is angry at the disobedience of his children: that the doors of their Father's house are shut against them: and that, though he is the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abounding in mercy, yet he will not pardon the guilty. It shows, likewise, that repentance, though the most proper course for a sinner to pursue, can have no efficacy in procuring pardon; for a return to obedience can be no compensation for past offences, and sorrow of the heart can be of no avail with that Merciful Being who rejoiceth only in the happiness of his creatures.

But this light which hath come into the world, while it opens our eyes to the wretchedness of our condition, and the frightful disorder of our nature, leaves us not without hope: it shows how this disorder is to be removed; it points out an arm bringing salvation. It informs us, that, the Son of God having left the bosom of his Father to become a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, having spent a life of pain and humility while he sojourned upon earth, and having, at length,

given himself up to the cross for us all, has by his sufferings and death, and by the perfect obedience of his life, made an atonement for the sins of men, procured their forgiveness, satisfied the justice of God, reconciled the Father of all to his rebellious children, delivered them from the curse of the law, and the dominion of sin, and purchased for them an eternal inheritance. The gospel gives us, also, the comfortable assurance, that, there is, now, no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus; that, whosoever believeth on him shall not perish; that the intercourse between heaven and earth, which sin had interrupted, is again opened, and that we may approach with boldness and confidence unto a throne of grace: seeing we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins.

The gospel also provides for the weakness and degeneracy of nature, by the aids of grace, and assistance of the Holy Spirit which it promiseth, and which Jesus Christ hath procured for us to enable us to mortify our affections and lusts, and raise our souls by holy obedience from earth to heaven, until we all come to the stature of perfect men in Jesus Christ.

These are great, essential, and interesting truths, which the Sun of righteousness hath discovered to the world, of which the heathen nations had not the smallest intimation or conjecture, and which the Jews saw only afar off, and through the dark medium of types and sacrifices.

III. Jesus Christ revealed to the world, a more perfect system of morals, and a more complete rule of conduct, than were known to either Jews or heathens. To confess the truth, the moral system of the ancient heathens was, in itself, much more complete than is commonly imagined. When we behold the exertions of the philosophers, and reflect on the discoveries which they made in this branch of knowledge, we must contemplate them with awe and respect, as the venerable ruins of that intellectual and moral fabrick which was once so glorious. We cannot but lament the unfortunate situation of those men whose unhappy lot it was to sit in the region and shadow of death; we cannot help wishing that they had enjoyed those privileges which many christians enjoy, but despise or misimprove. But, while we allow them to possess much merit, we must, also, confess that their

morality was defective in many respects. It had not sufficient universality. They recommended, chiefly, virtues of a peculiar cast; temperance, fortitude, and love of their country. Jesus brought to view many virtues of a milder nature, which the false and dazzling splendour of philosophy had cast into the shade; and in his first discourse to the world, recommended humility, godly sorrow, meekness, righteousness, peace, patience, and purity of heart. Besides this, the precepts which they actually delivered were not carried to a sufficient extent. But Jesus explained the law in its full extent; and showed, that, it was applicable to the thoughts and intentions of the heart, as well as to the outward actions.

By the old law, and by the usages of all nations, *murder* had been forbidden, and he who committed it was in danger of the judgment; but Jesus went farther, and taught that all unreasonable *anger* and *abuse*, though they were not carried to the length of murder, were nevertheless liable to the same condemnation—In every nation, except the most rude and barbarous, marriage had been instituted, and consequently adultery was reckoned a crime; but it was never supposed that there was any

harm in those desires which makes a man merely covet his neighbour's wife or daughter. Jesus, however, declared, that, whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart—Before the time of Jesus, false-swearing, where the lives and properties of men were concerned, was forbidden under the severest penalties; but those oaths and exclamations which occurred in common conversation were believed perfectly innocent, and were in familiar use with the best and wisest men. These, however, in every shape, Jesus forbade as highly sinful; and declared, that, whatsoever was more than *yea yea*, or *nay nay*, came of evil. In former times, retaliation and revenge had been held lawful; but Jesus required his followers not to resist evil. It had been said, that we should love our neighbour, and hate our enemies; but, Jesus required, that we should love also our enemies, forgive the injuries which are done to us, and indulge a charity and benevolence as universal and extensive as the love of our Father in heaven, who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and who sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. These are

some of those instances in which Jesus has published to the world a system of moral truths more excellent than that either of Jews or heathens.

Besides this, although the precepts of the ancient philosophers might be excellent in themselves, they could never be considered as a complete rule of conduct; for they were delivered, only, as the opinions of those individuals who taught them, without the authority of a law, or the sanction of a lawgiver. Accordingly, they were practised, only, by the followers of their own sect, while they were neglected or opposed by those of another, and had no weight with the vulgar who believed in neither. The Authour of christianity on the other hand, spake as one with authority; he commanded his followers in the powerful language of *I say unto you*; he delivered his precepts as a legislator who had a right to be obeyed, who could reward the obedient and punish the disobedient. The rule of life was, thus, rendered complete, certain, and level to the capacities of all men; because the *principle* or reason of obedience was thereby put upon a sure footing. The obligation of every precept rested on the will of the lawgiver, a

circumstance, of which the force would be immediately acknowledged, and which, being a matter of fact, could easily be ascertained without any laboured process of reasoning and investigation. But this plainness and certainty were evidently wanting in the heathen systems. They explained the reason of obedience, all in a very different, some in a most absurd manner. One sect* argued, that, men ought to be virtuous because of the native beauty and fitness of virtue; a second sect,† because of its good effect in the present life; a third sect‡ because it was commanded by the laws of their country; but, all forgot that the will of God constituted the very essence of duty, and omitted to explain those obligations which the connection between the creature and the Creator necessarily infers.

In like manner, though God had been pleased to deliver a law from Sinai, to his beloved people whom he had chosen out of all the nations of the earth; yet, neither, could this be compared with the laws of that pure dispensation by which it was succeeded. The Jewish law partook of the imperfections of

* The Stoicks.

† The Epicureans.

‡ Socrates, &c

that covenant of which it was a part. It was local, temporary, and obligatory only on one people. Jesus commanded his laws to be published to every creature and throughout every land: he delivered them in a general manner, suited to every case, to every climate, and to every stage of society: he laid men under obligations that were universal, immutable, and everlasting. The Jewish law was mixed and accompanied with many ceremonies and rites, with sacrifices, offerings, and burnings of incense, with washings and purifications, with keeping of days and fasts, new moons and sabbaths, and solemn assemblies. The observance of it was, thus, rendered highly burdensome and expensive; and, while they were careful of the smaller matters of the law, viz. the ceremonial part, they forgot the weightier matters, mercy and judgment. On the other hand, the precepts of the gospel are all pure, spiritual and moral, unmixed with any unmeaning ceremony, unaccompanied with any burdensome service. The commandments of Jesus are not grievous; “his yoke is easy, his burden is light.” True religion and undefiled before God and the Father, according to the definition of one of his

Apostles, is this, to visit the fatherless and the widow, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world.

We may add, that the christian morality is superiour to every other system, on account of the example of him who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.

But here let us draw back with awful reverence from so grand an object. For, with whatever instruction and profit the character of Jesus may be studied and imitated, as delivered in the simple and unadorned page of the Evangelists, and as intermixed and spread out with the transactions of his life, whereby its splendour is softened and allayed; yet to delineate it by itself is a task for which the human powers are unequal; to collect all the scattered rays of excellence into one point, would form an object too bright and too glorious for human eyes to contemplate. We could no more behold it than we could look upon the sun in his noontide blaze.

IV. Jesus Christ has discovered many important truths concerning our state after death; he has assured mankind of an immortal existence beyond the grave; he has brought to light, life and immortality, and a state of ever-

lasting reward and punishment when this life is at an end. There is a thick cloud which hangs over the close of life, and which renders the objects that lie beyond it dark and invisible. He, who yesterday exulted in his strength, to day lies numbered with the dead. He is no longer reckoned among the sons of men.—Does he continue to exist somewhere else? Or, are those passions and affections which in the present life are so interesting; those thoughts and understandings which wander through eternity, those boasted powers of reason and conscience for ever lost and swallowed up in the womb of nothing? Let us hear the voice of nature, and then let us attend to the still louder voice of revelation. Mankind, in every age and nation, led by instinctive feeling, or by a native desire of immortality, have had some expectation and belief, that, the present life was not the whole of our duration, but, that, it was only an introduction to an eternal existence in a more perfect state of being. There are many facts in human nature which give some confirmation to this hope. When men contemplated the extent of their faculties, and the great dignity of the human soul, it must have been

with great difficulty they could ever bring themselves to believe, that, they were to share the same fate with the beasts which perish. They could not think it consistent with wisdom and goodness to suppose, that, such a being as man was made, only to pass a few days in frivolous pleasures and occupations, (and the life of most men amounts to nothing more,) and then to drop insensibly out of existence.— When they viewed this world, and saw the unequal distribution of good and evil which took place in it : when they compared this with the notions, even the imperfect ones which they had formed, of the Governour of the universe, they presumed, that, there would be another scene of things, wherein happiness and misery would be exactly proportioned to virtue and vice. This presumption was, still, farther strengthened by those anticipations of punishment, and those horrors of conscience felt by bad men, even when out of the reach of justice, in their moments of solitude and retirement; by that principle of the mind, curiosity, which perpetually leads us on to new and farther discoveries in knowledge, and, by the soul's continual progress toward perfection. But all this amounted, only, to probability

and hope. About the existence of a future life, men were still in great doubt and uncertainty. It was not sufficiently clear and plain to have much influence on their conduct. The joys and sorrows of a world which was invisible, and distant, and uncertain, could never have weight sufficient to overbalance those pleasures and objects of sense which were seen, which were near at hand, and which, strongly, solicited their acceptance. Something, in short, was wanting to confirm the wishes and expectations of nature. This aid was received from the light of the gospel. Jesus has dispelled the doubts and fears of mankind: he has established the belief of a future life upon a foundation no less certain and stable than that of the rock of ages whereon his religion itself is built: he has assured us, upon the authority of God, who cannot lie, that, though death may destroy our viler part, yet it dare not touch the image of God, that we are immortal, and that spirits formed by the breath of heaven cannot be extinguished.

We may add, that Jesus Christ has exemplified a future state, if the expression be allowable, has made it a matter almost of demonstra-

tion, and has submitted it to the testimony of our senses, by his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension into heaven. Before Jesus, the future world was an undiscovered country, for those whom Jesus had raised up from the dead during his life, not acting in the prophetick character, had no authority to reveal what they had seen or heard while separated from the body. But Jesus returned from the land of the grave, and revealed to men the secrets and wonders of an unknown region. He sojourned upon earth, after having entered the mansions of death; and was translated into the invisible world before the very eyes of his disciples. Than this no evidence could be more certain, except, perhaps, that which St. Stephen received, who saw the heavens opened, and the Son of man sitting at the right hand of God.

Jesus Christ has farther improved and enlarged our knowledge of a future state, by discovering its true nature. If the heathens were uncertain about the reality of a future state, they were much more ignorant of the different situations of good and bad men in that state. Their poets, indeed, had sung of the pains of Tartarus and the blessings of

Elysium: but these were so absurd and extravagant that they were despised, even by the most foolish, and with the wise they brought the whole religion of which they were a part into discredit. But the rewards and punishments which Jesus hath revealed are highly rational, and excellently adapted to operate upon the hopes and fears of mankind. He has assured his followers, that, great is their reward in heaven. Into his Paradise, indeed, he admits not those sensual delights which have tended so much to recommend some other religions to the corrupt passions and desires of men. But, still he has set before them a prize well worth contending for; objects sufficiently great and interesting to animate their exertions, and keep up their courage amidst all the calamities, struggles, and dangers of this mortal life. He hath pointed out a state, which, under the continual influence of the divine presence, consists in the perfection of *reason* and *virtue*: he hath promised an inheritance which is undefiled, pure, innocent, and spiritual: he hath offered to his followers a crown of glory which fadeth not away: he hath assured them of being admitted into the heavenly society, which is an assembly of

peace and harmony, where charity never faileth, where all is love and happiness for ever: in short, he hath informed us that for those who love him is laid up glory, honour and immortality, pleasures such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.—On the dark side of the picture, the gospel dwells not so long. In general, it represents the torments of the wicked by the images of those things which are most dreadful in this life: by the worm which dieth not, and the fire which is not quenched. It warns us to flee from the wrath to come; from that judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries; from that tribulation and anguish which shall come upon every son of man who doeth evil. How much, then, hath Jesus revealed to us concerning the existence and nature of the life after death. What advantages have we not in the practice of our duty! How much stronger motives to obedience have we than those who lived in the former times of ignorance!

But, there is still another truth regarding a future state, for the knowledge of which we are entirely indebted to Jesus Christ; viz. the resurrection of the body. In nature, nothing

is perpetual. Every thing changes, decays, and advances by hasty steps to dissolution. But most things, which come under our observation, are again renewed, and, after a short period of dissolution, revive to a new life, under a new form. The herbs and flowers which wither at the approach of winter, again put forth their leaves and blossoms at the return of spring. By the side of the tree whose blasted trunk inspires melancholy reflections, we behold another plant springing from its roots and flourishing under its protection. To this the human race appear a striking exception. One generation goeth, and another cometh: Man, after having slept for a few years with the clods of the valley, can no more be distinguished from the common mass of matter; and, before Jesus, the world knew of no spring which would revive his ashes. But HE hath assured us, that not only our souls, but our bodies also shall exist for ever in another life. He hath told us that the grave, that gulf of the human race wherein, as was formerly believed, the bodies of men were swallowed up in succession and lost for ever, shall, at his command, yield up those who have been intrusted to its charge. He

hath assured us, that, this mortal shall put on immortality, [and this corruptible shall put on incorruption. He hath declared, that, when he shall appear in the glory of his Father and his holy angels, his voice shall be heard throughout the regions of death ; at the sound of the trumpet, the tyrant shall shrink from his throne and abdicate his dominion, the subjects of his power shall be released from their bondage, and those who are in their graves shall come forth.

These are some of the most important of those religious truths, of which the knowledge has been improved, enlarged, or communicated by Jesus Christ. From this rude and imperfect sketch of them, we cannot consider the conduct of Pilate, upon this occasion, without the greatest wonder and astonishment. Jesus Christ, in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, stands before him, ready to explain unto him, the newest, the most wonderful, the most sublime and the most interesting truths which ever engaged the attention of the world ; and he contents himself with asking a general question in a careless and insulting manner, and without waiting for an answer, goes out!——Let not us imi-

tate his example: but let us search the scriptures wherein those truths are contained; let us study, seriously and diligently, to acquire that knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation. Great is the light which is come into the world: If we love darkness rather than light, it must be because our deeds are evil.

SERMON II.

*The goodness of God, as displayed in his works,
not impaired by the existence of natural and
moral evil.*

1 JOHN, CHAP. 4, VER. 8.

“God is love.”

WHEN we look abroad through nature, and behold the sun, the moon, and the stars walking in their brightness, when we contemplate this earth, and consider the order, harmony, beauty, and grandeur which every where prevail, where is the man whose thoughts do not, involuntarily, ascend to the great first cause of all, who spoke, and it was done, who commanded, and it stood fast! God has not left himself without a witness; his works speak in an universal language, intelligible to every nation, and heard throughout every land. In them he has displayed the perfections of his nature; and, though abstract and general rea-

soning may be highly useful to demonstrate the existence of a supreme being, yet, it is, only, in his works that we can trace the features of his mind, and acquire that knowledge of his character which is fitted to inspire us with sentiments of piety and devotion. In them he is ever present, ever felt, and ever active in diffusing love, and joy, and happiness.

When we examine the works of God, and endeavour thence to deduce the character of their Authour, we meet with so many marks of goodness, that they, directly, lead us to infer, that, he is a being of the most unbounded love and benevolence; whose great delight is in the happiness of his creation. He is, in the language of the Apostle, love or goodness itself. This divine perfection constitutes, as it were, the essence of his nature, or is essential to his existence. It is this perfection which softens the awful grandeur of his character, and inspires his offspring with confidence and joy.

It is my design, at present, to collect and lay before you some proofs of that goodness and love which shine, so unconfined, throughout all God's works; secondly, to consider those

objections to the divine goodness which arise from the existence of natural and moral evil in the world—and, having done so, to point out, thirdly, the moral influence of such speculations.

The works of God form two great divisions, those of *nature* and those of *grace*. Let us take a short survey of each, and distinguish those emanations of goodness which flow from the fountain of the divine benevolence.

The works of *nature* comprehend those of *creation*, and of *providence*. The former lead our thoughts to the original constitution of things, the latter to the continual preservation of that constitution in its order and beauty.

When we examine the constitution of nature, we plainly perceive the happiness of his creatures to have been the great object of their Maker. To man he has given powers which make him capable of the most exquisite enjoyment. Upon every other creature, he has bestowed faculties suitable to its condition. Every thing which lives and moves, is fitted to feel the pleasure allotted to its sphere, and to exult with joy in the beneficence of its Creator. Not only is the goodness of God displayed in the frame of every animal, and in

the capacity of enjoyment which they all possess; but, also, in that provision which he has made for the supply of their wants, and the gratification of their desires, and in those stores of happiness which he has scattered, every where in so great profusion. How many things, for example, were made for the ease and convenience of man. Nature pours forth all her stores to contribute to his happiness. Every beast of the field and every bird of the air, every hill and every valley, every fountain, every herb, and every green tree administers to his pleasure. Who can estimate the happiness which results from a contemplation of the objects of nature, from the exercise of the imagination, from the improvement of the understanding, from the cultivation of good and benevolent affections, and from the practice of virtue?

But, this is not all. The Maker of the universe has, not only, displayed his love in contriving a system so well fitted to promote happiness, but, also, in continually governing it, in such a manner, as, effectually, to answer the end of its formation. What rich abundance of goodness does he display in the daily works of his providence, in the continual succession

of day and night, in the gradual revolution of seasons, which, loudly, proclaim the bounty of their Authour? Amidst the immensity of his works nothing is forgotten; every thing is distinguished by universal love. Like a kind and compassionate father, he warms and cherishes all his offspring, and, daily, supplies their returning wants. He feedeth the young ravens that cry unto him; not a sparrow falleth to the ground without his permission. But, if we wish to see his goodness, in full perfection, we must turn to man, his favourite work, and mark that providential care which maketh the outgoings of the morning to rejoice, and the shades of evening to descend in peace. This is, admirably, described by a great king in the following beautiful pastoral hymn in praise of the divine goodness: “The Lord is
“ my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh
“ me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth
“ my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of
“ righteousness for his name’s sake. Yea,
“ though I walk through the valley of the
“ shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for
“ thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they
“ comfort me. Thou preparest a table before

“ me in the presence of mine enemies: thou
“ anointest my head with oil, my cup run-
“ neth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall
“ follow me all the days of my life: and I
“ will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”

If this was the case with David, his son Solomon saw a very different scene in his days, when, after the most diligent search for happiness, he declared, that all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and, that, man was born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards. Indeed, it is impossible to survey the world and consider the complaints of misery and pain which every where are heard, and behold the mixture of evil which is infused into the cup of every man, without asking, how these things are to be reconciled with the unbounded love and benevolence of the divine Being? The difficulty is great; and before it is removed, we cannot entertain just notions of the character of God, nor approach him with that confidence and joy, which are due from children to a father.

And, in the first place, it may be observed, that, the complaints of men are too loud and too frequent. If, indeed, we number up those real ills which arise from our own lusts and

passions, and those fictitious ones which are created by a disordered imagination, we may swell the catalogue of human miseries to an enormous size. But, what reason have we to complain of providence, when we ourselves, alone, are to blame? What our bountiful Creator hath done for us, we have already observed : and what are we that we should be visited with so much loving kindness? When we contemplate this scene, wherein we are placed, which is so grand, when we survey this earth, which is so beautiful, how vile a thing is *man* on this magnificent work of heaven? When we compare the grandeur of the structure with the meanness of the inhabitant, we cannot help exclaiming with the psalmist, “ What is man that thou art mindful of him, “ or the son of man that thou dost visit him.”

Besides this, we have good reason to infer, both from observation and from presumptive reasoning, that, infinite goodness requires that there be a gradual progression and ascent from the lowest to the most exalted being, that no part be wanting, no station be unoccupied from the millions in the peopled grass to the most perfect angels which surround the throne of God. For one of two things must be be-

lieved, either that the goodness of God made it necessary for him to create all beings the most perfect and the most happy possible; which is contrary to fact, and which could be shown to be inconsistent with the wisdom and perfection of God's works; or else, that, this progressive scale of being is not inconsistent with his goodness. Now it is plain, that, in this chain of existence, there must be somewhere or other such a state as that of man, a state which is imperfect, liable to change, and exposed to suffering and pain. The question, then, is whether man is placed in the state proper for him. This brings us, at once, to see, that our reasoning and complaint on this head arise from pride. We think that we are entitled to destroy every beast of the field, and every bird of the air for our pleasure and amusement; but, if we feel the least pain and unhappiness ourselves, we immediately exclaim that God is cruel and unjust. We seem, indeed, to be the chief of God's works on this earth, but perhaps we only act a secondary part to some other system. We are the first of that order of beings with which we are acquainted; but perhaps we are lower than the lowest of another order. We foolishly ima-

gine, that, this spot of earth is sufficient to engross the care and attention of the Almighty. But what is this globe and all its appendages to him by whom worlds are continually created and dissolved. The keen eye of philosophy hath often discovered, in the wide regions of space, stars of which before we had no knowledge ; and it hath also sought for others, with which it was formerly familiar, but whose place could no more be found. And when this globe itself shall be dissolved, it will be nothing but as the extinction of one luminous point amid the immensity of the Creator's works.

Farther, we may observe, that, much false reasoning on this subject arises from forming unjust ideas of the divine love or goodness; an attribute which we abuse and trifle with, both in our conduct and speculations. Our conduct makes mercy highly necessary, and we trust much to it. Our speculations do not correct the mistake, but lead us to form the most vague and absurd notions concerning this attribute. It is not a blind and undistinguishing propensity; it is not a mere tendency to produce happiness, as is too often supposed, but a tendency to make the wise, the virtuous,

and the honest man happy. We, very improperly, divide the attributes of God, and, as it were, set them at variance. God is one : and, though, from the imperfection of human conception, we frequently speak of his perfections as separate and distinct, yet they are all the same in the divine essence. We do not consider that a God *all mercy* is a God unjust ; and we bid goodness triumph over God himself, as if this attribute of his nature would lead him to do any thing repugnant to his holiness and justice. Much of the *natural* evil which is in the world, at least all that which is the consequence of moral guilt, is thus accounted for, in consistency with the most perfect *love*. The only difficulty, in this case, is whether, when God foresaw the calamities and distresses which moral evil would bring upon his creatures, it was consistent with his goodness to permit its introduction? But, upon supposition, that, we are *free* agents, (and, that we are, the voice of nature, speaking within us, declares in the most unequivocal manner) this question is very absurd. For to suppose that God could make us free, that is, could make it possible for us to commit sin, and at the same time could prevent the commission of it, that

is, could make it impossible, is to suppose a contradiction. If it is asked why God made us free agents when he foresaw that we would abuse our liberty? the only answer which any human being can give is, "We cannot tell." But who art thou, O man, who repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say unto him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?—With equal propriety might we ask why we are men and not angels? And with such questions we will not stop until we assail heaven itself, and shake the throne of the Most High.

Thus it appears that the sufferings of the guilty are, in no respect, inconsistent with the greatest goodness. But, how are the sufferings of the just to be accounted for? Upon this subject, men, anxious to vindicate the ways of God, have reasoned in various manners.

Some have argued, that we are not fit judges of what is good, and what is evil. We see too little into the ways of providence to be able to decide upon them: We are but a very small part of the universe, and a part can never contain the whole. As well might an insect pretend to judge of architecture, and to decide concerning proportion and disproportion, as we attempt to follow this mighty maze of

things, wherein we are immediately entangled and lost. What we call *evil* may be only so *relatively* and not *absolutely*. What seems to us disorder and imperfection may, only, contribute to the order and harmony of God's universe. This life is but a short part of the duration assigned to us, and, for any thing we can know at present, the pain and suffering which we now endure, may have a tendency to promote our real good and happiness in some future stage of our progress. Now we know but in part ; now we see through a glass, darkly ; but when we shall see face to face, when this scene of things shall be finally closed, when this great plan of providence shall be fully unravelled, then shall we discover the reason why good men groaned under suffering and oppression, then shall we see that bright reversion which is in the heavens for distressed innocence, then shall we know even as we are known.

We may observe, farther, that God governs the world not by particular, but by general, constant, and uniform laws. Without this, there could be no certainty in human affairs : all would be disorder and confusion. Whatever ills, therefore, are the consequence of ad-

hering to these laws cannot be any imputation on the divine goodness, because greater ills would arise from departing from them. It would be cruelty and not love, folly and not wisdom, if God's *moral* government were permitted to counteract his *natural*, if the established laws of the universe were altered or suspended in order to make individuals happy. Such a variable and changing system of government might suit the character of a weak and capricious mortal, who perpetually reverses his laws for the sake of his favourites, but it is far from the counsels of the infinite God. We wish that good men were wealthy and prosperous and happy : but what if they are indolent and inactive ? In this case, let us consider the dreadful consequences that would ensue from rewarding them. If the hand of the slothful made rich, if weakness and not abilities ensured success, the very existence of this world would be at an end. Where would be that industry and diligence by which, as by a moving power, the whole machine of nature is carried on ? Where would be the encouragement to cultivate and improve our faculties ? Idleness and dissipation would be as advantageous as activity and labour. The very

chains which bind together human society would be dissolved, and the world would quickly go to disorder and ruin.

Lastly, it must be remembered, that, here we are in a state of probation and discipline, wherein our faith and obedience are put to the test, and our virtues, by adversity and trial, are refined and exalted. Now, such a state as this, necessarily, implies that we shall have some temptations to struggle with, and some difficulties to surmount. For if every thing were on the side of religion, and nothing was to be gained by vice but immediate destruction, it would be no state of probation at all, we would have no trial to abide, we would want that peaceable fruit of righteousness which is wrought by the salutary chastening of the Lord. In short, since adversity has an excellent influence on the character, it is evident, that, a state wherein there is a considerable share of pain and suffering has an ultimate tendency to promote the perfection of God's works.

The extensive prosecution of this argument, which is intimately connected with the subject under consideration, and which cannot be foreign to this place, if it tend in any degree to exhibit the divine character in a more amiable

light, prevents me from examining that second wonder and glory of God's works where there is no room for argumentation, but all is love and mercy and grace unspeakable. I shall conclude my observations at this time with stating the *moral influence* of this doctrine, "that God is love."

If God is love, if all his works declare his goodness, how careful ought we to be, to cultivate this principle, and to imitate so perfect an example ! If we wish to recover that image after which we were originally formed, if we are ambitious to gain the favour and approbation of that great Being who upholds all things by the word of his power, we must study to acquire a spirit of universal benevolence, charity and meekness ; we must be, daily, employed in works of goodness, in diffusing peace and joy and happiness around us by a kind and peaceable behaviour. Thus, only, can we resemble the great Parent of nature who is good unto all, and whose tender mercies are over all his works. To excite such dispositions, nothing can be better fitted than frequent meditation on the divine love : For whoever contemplates the character of God must be struck with admiration of such infinite

perfection ; and from admiration, the transition to imitation is easy and natural. We find, that, we gradually acquire a resemblance to those with whom we daily associate and converse : we, insensibly, imitate their manners, and adopt their modes of thinking. And, surely, nothing can be more noble and more worthy of attention than that which tends to assimilate us to God, who is the source of all perfection. Besides, if God is love, how opposite to his character must be all malevolence, cruelty and oppression ? He abhorreth the bloody and deceitful man. None shall be admitted to his favour and enjoyment who have not, in this life, been at pains to cultivate that temper of benevolence and love which characterizes the inhabitant of the regions of eternal love.

Since God is so kind and beneficent to all his creatures, both in their original formation, and in the constant care which he exercises over them ; since he has distinguished us above all his works, and daily loads us with his benefits, what strong obligations do we lie under to love and serve and praise him ! Gratitude is a feeling natural to the human mind. It arises, spontaneously, upon receiving a benefit,

and we cannot help esteeming in some degree, the man, however unworthy, who has been our benefactor. We behold with horroir that man who has received of our kindness, but who has made us no returns of love and regard.

If these are the principles which regulate our conduct and judgment concerning our fellow men, with how much greater force ought they to influence our conduct towards God ? to whom we owe every thing which we enjoy, and who is every way worthy of our holiest esteem. If the obligation be increased in proportion to the favour ; if our esteem correspond with the merit of the object, what infinite obligations are we under to God ! What friendship is like to that of the Almighty ?—Who among the sons of men can be compared unto him ? Neither are the returns which he requires grievous nor hard to be paid. They are no costly sacrifice nor offering ; but the simple incense of prayer and praise, and the sacrifice of a broken and a contrite heart. O ! then, give thanks unto the Lord for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever. O ! that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men ! Bless the Lord, O ! my soul ! and

forget not all his benefits who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies. *Amen.*

SERMON III.

On the nature of repentance ; and the motives furnished by the gospel for engaging in this duty.

LUKE, CHAP. 15, VER. 18.

“ I will arise and go to my father.”

BEFORE Jesus Christ, who came to finish transgression and to make an end of sin, appeared in the character of a publick teacher, the world was involved in the double night of ignorance and error. The heathen nations were sunk in the grossest idolatry, superstition, and wickedness. Both the religion and the lives even of the favourite people of God were sadly corrupted. They were divided into innumerable parties and sects ; and, as, usually, happens, amidst their eager contentions for their own particular opinions, true religion and virtue passed unregarded. The Pharisees and Sadducees, the two principal sects, follow-

ed roads directly opposite, but both equally averse from the true spirit of religion. The former taught, as the doctrines of God, the commandments of men ; and the latter overturned all religion and morality, by denying their first principles, the resurrection of the body, the existence of spirits, and consequently a state of retribution after death. In such a situation of things, a *forerunner* was necessary to clear the way for our Saviour's appearance, and to prepare the minds of the Jews for the reception of the gospel. This forerunner was John the baptist. The principal subject of his preaching was *repentance*. This was most likely to answer the end for which he was sent ; and this duty he enforced by a powerful consideration, which the old prophets and preachers of righteousness could not make use of, namely, the near approach of the kingdom of God. "Repent ye ;" said he, "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." By the kingdom of heaven, in the New Testament, and, particularly, in the discourses of our Lord, is commonly meant the gospel state, that kingdom which God hath erected on earth, and the administration of which he hath committed to his Son, for bringing back the rebellious

to their duty, for delivering them from the power of sin and the dominion of the devil, and for bringing many sons unto glory. Under this dispensation, new motives to repentance are afforded, and God, though he suffered the former times of ignorance to pass without condemnation, now calls all men, every where, to repent.

But repentance was, not only, a necessary preparation for the kingdom of heaven ; it, also, continued to be the subject of frequent and earnest exhortation with Jesus and his disciples. Our Lord began his ministry in the very same words with his forerunner ; and explained and inculcated the duty of repentance in various parables and discourses. In the beautiful and striking parable of the prodigal son, the progress of vice, and the return to duty are delineated in the plainest and most forcible manner. A young man, prompted by curiosity and a love of pleasure, leaves the peaceful retreats of his father's house, and ventures forth into the world, in quest of enjoyment. But the sea of life was too stormy, and beset with too many dangers for so unsteady and inexperienced a pilot. He falls into the snares of the wicked ; he goes with the

multitude to do evil ; and, in a far country, beyond the reach of a parent's care, he indulges in debauchery, intemperance, and riotous living. But the pleasures of sin are only for a season, and the end of them is death.—The scene is soon reversed : his substance is soon wasted : the voice of mirth and joy is heard no more : the venal tribe who courted his favour and gilded his prosperity, disappear in the day of darkness. He, who, formerly, had servants at his command, and said unto one *go* and he *goeth*, and unto another *come* and he *cometh*, is now obliged to perform the office of the vilest slave : he who once fed on all the luxuries of the banquet, is now glad to satisfy the cravings of hunger with the husks which are eaten by the swine : he who was clothed with purple and fine linen, can now scarcely procure a rag to defend him from the severities of the season. But, even in this deplorable state, he is nearer the kingdom of heaven than when he first departed from his native land. An important change is soon to be accomplished. Reflection, which the sound of pleasure had lulled asleep, is now awakened. His eyes are, now, opened to the folly, and guilt, and danger of his situation. He

awakens from his infatuated dreams, and says, “ how many hired servants of my father’s have “ bread enough and to spare, and I perish with “ hunger !” Impressed with this idea, and confident of the tender affection of his father, he, instantly, determines to *arise and go to his father*. It is this change of mind, this return to duty, this repentance unto life which is the object of our present attention. I shall, therefore, endeavour,

I. To explain the nature of true repentance.

II. Point out the new motives to the performance of this duty which the gospel affords, and

III. Conclude the discourse with some observations connected with the subject.

I. The best description of repentance that has, perhaps, ever been given, is to be met with in the shorter catechism of this church, in answer to this question (87) “ What is repentance unto life ?” We shall therefore take it as our guide in explaining the nature of this duty. “ Repentance unto life is a saving “ grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense “ of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of “ God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred “ of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full

“ purpose of, and endeavour after new obedience.”

It must be observed, then, that repentance is the gift of God, and is wrought in us by the Holy Spirit. That man has it in his own power to repent and return unto God, is an idea inconsistent with a proper notion of repentance and a true knowledge of human nature. It is plainly contrary to scripture. There is, it must be allowed, in every man's mind, a principle of conscience which points out to him his duty, and which punishes every breach of its laws with a painful feeling of remorse. In the present state of human nature, however, this principle is, evidently, unequal to the task of man's cure ; it is, seldom, faithful to its trust ; and, even, that sorrow for sin which it produces is far from being that genuine repentance to which it seems to bear some resemblance. It proceeds from improper motives, and stops short before it hath produced any change. It ends, at last, like the returning of the dog to his vomit, or of the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. The scriptures assure us, that, it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure ; and, that, it is he alone who grant-

eth repentance unto the acknowledging of the truth. Still, you say, “it is required of us as “our duty.” Most undoubtedly : but so is everyone of those christian graces which Christ hath purchased for us. Even reconciliation to God, which is, certainly, procured by the death and intercession of Jesus, is commanded us in scripture. “We pray you in Christ’s “stead,” says the apostle, “be ye reconciled “unto God.” “Make ye a new heart,” says God by the prophet Ezekiel, and yet, soon after, he makes this new promise, “a new heart “will I give you and a right spirit will I put “within you.” The *exercise* of repentance, then, is our duty, but the true source of it is the spirit of God.

Previous to it, however, two changes are produced, which, though not properly parts of it, are absolutely necessary to its existence. The first is a conviction of sin ; a sense of its guilt and danger. When the sinner is led, by the spirit, to compare his conduct and character with the law of God, that perfect rule of life, the commandments of which are exceedingly broad, he sees many defects in them to which he was before a stranger ; he is convinced, that he has sinned, and, in innumerable

respects, come short of the glory of God. He finds that he has omitted many parts of his duty, and, in many instances, acted contrary to it. He sees that even in those actions which appeared good, his motives to the performance of them were improper, and consequently destroyed their merit. “I was alive without the law once,” says St. Paul, “but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.” By the law, then, is the knowledge of sin. And when a sinner thus arrives at the knowledge of his iniquity, he, also, becomes sensible of the guilt and danger which he has incurred. When he contemplates the nature of God, and that strict obedience which he requires, he shrinks back with horror at his own ingratitude towards his greatest Benefactor; he views, with deep concern, that pollution which separates him from his God, and that guilt which exposes him to the displeasure of his Maker. Innocence hath forsaken his breast, and peace is never found but in her train. Guilt, and her attendant fear, prey upon his soul. When the thunders roll, and the lightnings flash, that voice of power which speaks peace to the good, sounds dreadful in the ears of that man whom conscience appals

with awful forebodings of punishment to come. He trembles at the thoughts of that curse which is due to every one who continueth not to do all things which are written in the book of the law.

This previous change was experienced by the prodigal son. "He came to himself." Formerly he lived as in a fairy land, where magick and enchantment dressed up every thing in false and gaudy colours, where all was beauty to the eye and musick to the ear; but the spell was dissolved, the fictions of imagination were fled, and he beheld the real wretchedness of his situation. The wicked man is *beside himself*. Madness, saith Solomon, is in the heart of the sinner. The life of sin is like a dream, during which we believe ourselves seated at a rich banquet, but when we awake we find it all an illusion. It is a state of delirium or infatuation which makes us believe that we are rich and increased in goods, and, that, we stand in need of nothing; but when we come to our senses, we find ourselves wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

The second thing previous to repentance is an apprehension of the mercy of God, in

Christ, to such as are penitent. It is, perhaps, of no great consequence to determine the precise order in which faith and repentance take place ; for they are intimately connected and never separated. It seems absurd to say, that, a man can believe, before he has any knowledge of sin, before he sees that he has done wrong. But faith in Christ appears naturally to follow those alarms, and that anxiety of mind, into which conviction throws the sinner. Indeed, a hope of pardon is, absolutely, necessary to the very existence of repentance : for without it, conviction would lead only to despair : and we will never repent of those sins from the punishment of which we cannot escape. Horrors of conscience and anticipations of wrath seize and overwhelm the sons of reprobation. Such pangs felt the murderer of his brother, and the son of perdition. The devils, who are without hope, are without repentance. But the true penitent sees the cherubim and the flaming sword, which kept the way to the tree of life, removed by the blood of Jesus ; he sees the gates of mercy laid open for the admission of the returning sinner ; he beholds the God of love stretching out his hands, and recalling his rebellious children.

If the prodigal son had doubted the affection of his father, and expected a rejection whenever he pleaded for being, again, admitted into his house, never would he have set out on his return, but would have languished out his life in a foreign land, under the most abject form of misery. But his language was, and the language of every penitent soul is; “I will arise and go to my father.” “Though I have offended him, and am cast out of his sight, he is, still, my father, and pitieth me as a father pitieth his children. I know, that, there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. At the tribunal of God former offenders have found mercy, and former sinners have been taken unto favour.— To his ears the cry of the penitent never ascended in vain. He is, ever, nigh to all who call upon him in sincerity of heart. I will, therefore, prostrate myself at the footstool of his throne, with the faith and hope that I will not be cast out.”

These two things having been accomplished, the day of righteousness hath dawned, and repentance draweth near. This is commonly expressed in sacred writ by a word which literally signifies *a change of mind*. For, in gen-

eral, repentance is a change of the dispositions of the mind from evil to good : it is an enlightening of the understanding, which formerly was dark ; it is a renewal of the heart and conduct, which, formerly, were depraved. It is, also, called a *conversion unto God*, and with great propriety, for, the sinner who repents, deserts the slavery of sin and the devil, chooses God for a king to reign over him, and dedicates himself to his service. But, we are now prepared for a particular view of each step of the penitential progress.

1. The first part of repentance consists in a deep sorrow for sin, in grief and contrition of heart for having been guilty of its commission. This sorrow may arise from two causes ; the dread of punishment, and the sense of guilt. A man must, naturally, be grieved for having brought himself into misery, and for having rendered himself liable to eternal wrath. But sorrow which proceeds from no other motive than this, is not that sorrow which is a part of true repentance. Indeed such sorrow is, properly speaking, no sorrow for *sin* at all. The sorrow of a man, for example, who laments the ill consequences of his debauchery, or the punishment of his crimes by the hands of civil

justice, is nothing but a painful sense of natural evil. For, it would have been the same had his health or fortune been ruined by disease, or had he suffered unjustly. It may have some respect to the man himself, but it has none to God, towards whom repentance ought to be directed. It is that *worldly sorrow* which, as the Apostle says, worketh death.— It only produceth that *wounding of the spirit*, which cannot be borne, and those terrours which distract the soul. On the other hand, that godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of, is of a very different nature. It arises, chiefly, from a sense of guilt. The person who is actuated by it, is sorry for having trespassed the law of his nature, and for having offended that holy God who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, that generous Benefactor who hath loaded him with so many benefits, that kind and indulgent Parent who hath treated him with so much forbearance. Genuine sorrow of this kind is much more pungent than what arises from any loss which we may have sustained in our temporal interests. It is greater than grief for the death of an only son or of a first born. It makes the penitent to *go mourning all the*

day. There is no rest in his bones because of his sin, and his sorrow is continually before him.

This sorrow is attended with self-condemnation. A man under the influence thereof produces no excuses to palliate his crime, pleads not the ignorance or weakness of human nature, but condemns himself as, perfectly, inexcusable before God. This first part of repentance was pure, and genuine, and complete in the prodigal son. He did not lament the ruin and disgrace which he had brought upon himself, the injury which he had done to his character and fortune, the poverty and distress into which he had fallen. He was sorry, only, for having offended his father, and sinned against his God. "Father," said he, "I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." As sorrow for sin produces self-condemnation, so it is itself produced by it. For, as that pleasure is most pure and exquisite which proceeds from a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man, so that anguish is unspeakable, which springs from remorse and self-disapprobation. But the wound must be probed before it can be cured; and consequently these are symptoms of a restoration commenced.

2. The next and *second* step in repentance is a hatred of sin, and a love of holiness ; a removal of bad and an acquisition of good dispositions. This (every part of repentance being the link of a connected chain) is the necessary consequence of the former. For, we must, undoubtedly, abhor that line of conduct which we grieve to have followed, and love that which we lament to have forsaken. Thus says the psalmist, “ I hate vain thoughts, but “ thy law do I love.” Besides, it is absolutely necessary that the heart and affections be totally changed, in order to make repentance of any value, or, in any respect, acceptable in the sight of God. For it is impossible that the Father of mercies can have any pleasure in the sorrow of his creatures, merely for it's own sake ; otherwise the hopeless anguish of the damned would be more grateful to him than the ingenuous mourning of the penitent. Nor could it answer any good purpose, or be in any way consistent, to be grieved for what we still love and resolve to pursue : and to confess such sorrow and our own guilt before God, is to mock him with a worthless sacrifice.

This important change of character and temper and disposition, is represented by va-

rious images in sacred writ. It is called a *new creation* ; because, by the operation of the spirit, virtuous principles are formed in that soul, where all before was without form and void. It is styled the *new birth* ; because it introduces us into a new world, gives us, as it were, new faculties, and makes us acquainted with new pleasures, and a new manner of life. It is represented under the idea of a *resurrection from the dead* ; because those who were dead in trespasses and sins, are thereby made alive unto God. St. Paul describes it as a *putting off the old*, and a *putting on the new man* ; and, elsewhere, as a *crucifixion of the affections and lusts*. By this variety of expression we learn the great necessity of such a change, and that it is an essential part of true repentance.

3. But a no less essential part of it, is the fruit and consequence of this, viz. the practice of holiness, and a sincere endeavour after new obedience. This alone makes repentance complete and effectual. For, not only must the heart be changed, but the conduct also must be altered. We must, not only, resolve to keep God's righteous judgments, but we must also follow these resolutions with a suit-

able life and conversation. Those men are egregiously mistaken, concerning the nature of true repentance, who rest in sorrow for sin, in confessions and tears, and in religious inclinations and purposes ; as if these things constituted its essence. The sacred writers, with one voice, uniformly, represent it as the great design of christianity to “redeem us from all “iniquity ;” and insist upon “putting away “the evil of our doings, ceasing to do evil, “and learning to do well,” as an essential part of our conversion unto God. And if it be not allowed that these things are, properly speaking, a part of repentance, yet, at all events, it must be granted, that, they are its natural fruit, and its only evidence. For how can we know that our sorrow of mind has been genuine, or our change of heart real, without that obedience to which such a sorrow and change must naturally dispose us ? Thus does the apostle Paul speak of the effects of godly sorrow, 2 Cor. vii. 11. “Behold, this self same thing, “that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what “carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what “clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement “desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge !”

In the same manner, John the baptist thus addressed himself to those who had come to his baptism, and who had confessed their sins in Jordan. “ O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come ? “ Bring forth fruits meet for repentance.” By which he, plainly, insinuated that without these fruits, their repentance was neither real nor valuable.

II. Let us now inquire into those new motives which the gospel affords to the performance of this duty.

The law of nature, as it, only, pointed out to man his duty, without any provision in case of a departure from it, laid him under no immediate obligation to repentance. It laid him, however, under a virtual obligation : because to repent of his crimes, and return unto God, after he had transgressed his law, was the only compensation which he could make, and was the most reasonable course which he could pursue. For, even without the light of the gospel, man could not but perceive the guilt and danger of transgression ; and though nature could not discover to him that repentance, of itself, would have any influence in procuring pardon, yet it must have informed him, that,

there was a great difference between that guilt of sin which was obstinately persisted in, and that which was repented of and forsaken.— But these considerations were weak and ineffectual, compared with those strong and powerful motives by which the gospel enforces the duty of repentance.

1. A powerful motive to repentance, considered as a part of the gospel scheme, is the promise of success which that scheme gives; the assurance that those who repent and are converted shall have their sins blotted out.— The information of the light of nature concerning the efficacy of repentance in seeking to obtain pardon, is not only unsatisfactory but highly discouraging. A slight attention to the course of providence must convince us that it is not considered by the Governour of the world as any proper satisfaction to divine justice.— The intemperate man often feels the punishment of his debauchery and intemperance, in a broken and ruined constitution, long after he has repented of his crimes, and been reclaimed from them. Now, if this be God's stated method of dealing with men in the ordinary course of his providence, we have not the smallest reason to think that he will do otherwise in his

final adjustment of rewards and punishments. Neither does a consideration of the nature of repentance tend to give us any encouragement. Of what have we seen it to consist? Of sorrow of the heart for that which is past, a change of mind, and a return to obedience for the future. But this change of mind, and return to obedience, are nothing but our duty under a new name in consequence of a former deviation. This new name gives it no new worth. It may be accepted as a part of our duty, but it cannot be considered as any compensation for the omission of it. With respect to sorrow for sin; it is, indeed, a passion in itself uneasy; but it is the consequence of guilt, and, if it arise from the foresight of inevitable punishment, it possesses not the smallest merit. A villain who deserves the punishment of death deserves no praise for living in continual fear of it. Nay, though it be that genuine, rational sorrow which has been described, it can have no efficacy in procuring pardon. For, it would be the greatest folly imaginable, in any lawgiver, to annex threatenings to his laws, and yet pardon every person who transgressed them upon his testifying his sincere sorrow for his crime. If it be said,

that, it would be so in men who cannot judge of the sincerity of professions, and who, consequently, might be apt to class together the innocent and the guilty, but not in God who knoweth the thoughts and secrets of the heart ; it must be allowed, that, God neither has annexed nor possibly could annex (consistently with his divine rectitude) this condition to the law of nature, when he first promulgated it, “ that though any man lived in downright “ disobedience to the law, he would be forgiven and received into favour when he became truly sorry for his offence.” This would enervate the force of all laws, and would be nothing but an invitation to sin. How then is it proper for God to *do* that which it is absolutely improper for him even to promise or profess ? Or how is it fit that we should live by one rule, and be judged by another ? The information of the gospel is much more pregnant with comfort, and much more encouraging to penitent sinners. In it, we learn that the demands of divine justice are satisfied, that God is reconciled to us if we will be but reconciled to him, that the supreme Being has no pleasure in the death of sinners, but, rather, wishes that they would return, repent, and

live, and that those who confess and forsake their sins shall obtain mercy. In short, no obstacle lies in the way of our obtaining eternal happiness, but our own impenitency; and, if the hope of so great a reward as the gospel holds forth, does not persuade us, we are incapable of persuasion.

2. The clear light of the gospel, above the faint twilight of the religion of nature, is a new motive to execute the work of repentance.— That perfect revelation of our duty which the gospel gives us, that testimony of the evil nature of sin, and of God's hatred of it, which we have displayed in the punishment which was inflicted on his beloved Son, are strong inducements to us to break off *our former lusts in ignorance*, and to walk as *children of the light and of the day*. For, if our duty be now so plain that he who runs may read, we must be much more inexcusable in neglecting it, than when we had nothing to trust to but the imperfect information of reason, or the feeble voice of conscience which could be heard with difficulty amidst the noise and clamours of vicious passions and customs and prejudices.—
“ He that knew not his master's will, and did
“ commit things worthy of stripes, shall be

“beaten with few stripes; but that servant
“that knew his Lord’s will, and prepared not
“himself, neither did according to his will,
“shall be beaten with many stripes.”

Again, the gospel enforces repentance, and points out the necessity of it, by the clear and full discovery which it makes of the rewards and punishments of a future life. To the heathens, whose religion was that of nature, a thick cloud hung over the close of life, which was impenetrable to many, and which rendered the objects that lay beyond it obscure even to the most clear sighted. The gospel dispelled this cloud, and discovered to men the gates of Paradise opened for the admission of the just, and the abodes of misery prepared for the wicked. The view of these things as represented in the gospel, should awaken, one would imagine, the most senseless and inattentive sinners, and lead them to forsake their sins. Who can hear of the worm which never dieth, and of the fire which is never quenched, and still persist in his iniquity? Who is he that is convinced, that, when the Saviour of the good appears, he will bestow upon his followers an inheritance which is incorruptible, and a crown of glory which fadeth not

away, and still does not press forward that he may obtain the prize ? Not, indeed, that these things are of themselves sufficient to produce true repentance, but they, at least, show the folly of impenitency ; and as they are generally the first thing which lays hold on corrupt and hardened minds, so they may excite such considerations as will end in real conversion unto God. Great is the light which hath come into the world. What must be our condemnation if we still walk in darkness ?

3. The sufferings and death of Christ lay us under the strongest obligations to the exercise of repentance. It seems impossible to contemplate these, with any degree of seriousness and attention, without being melted into sorrow and regret. This effect, we find, it had upon that company of people and of women, who followed him to his crucifixion, who, as St. Luke tells us, “ bewailed and lamented “ him,” and to whom Jesus gave this advice : “ Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, “ but weep for yourselves and for your children.” Shall we be more unconcerned than they were ? Nay, shall we possess less feeling than the inanimate creation, which seemed to sympathize with the sufferings of

their Lord? The sun (as if out of shame or aversion) hid his face, and left the earth involved for three hours in a preternatural and most mournful darkness : The earth shook : The rocks were rent : The veil of the temple was rent asunder : The graves did open, and many of those who slept awoke. And can we be unmoved ? We, who are the authours of Christ's sufferings, and most nearly interested in the event of them ?

When we take a nearer view of these sufferings, and consider, that, our sins were the cause of them, and, that every thing, which he endured, was in our room and for our benefit, what detestation of sin, what self-condemnation, what purposes of obedience should arise in our minds ? We abhor the traitor who betrayed him, the priests who accused and prosecuted him, the people by whom he was reviled and insulted, the executioners who nailed him to the accursed tree : in short, we execrate the memory of every one who had any concern in this mournful scene. These were indeed the instruments, but our sins were the real cause. " He was delivered for our offences." They dragged him before the tribunal ; they cried out with a louder and more

effectual voice than that of his most inveterate foes, *crucify him, crucify him* : they nailed him to the tree : they pierced his side, and did rend his body. And will we continue to love these fatal sins, though they are the most proper objects of our hatred and indignation, even more so than the murderers of the holy and the just one ? Will we not, rather, awake from our fatal lethargy, and bid adieu to the pleasures of vice ? pleasures, perhaps, to us, but bitter, indeed, to our Redeemer ? This is represented as the effect of Christ's sufferings in almost every page of the New Testament. Thus says the apostle Paul, Tit. ii. 14. " Who gave
 " himself for us, that he might redeem us from
 " all iniquity, and purify unto himself a pe-
 " culiar people zealous of good works." The same doctrine is taught by St. Peter, 1 Pet. iv. 1.
 " Forasmuch, as Christ hath suffered for us in
 " the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the
 " same mind : for he that suffered in the flesh,
 " hath ceased from sin."

4. Another new and powerful motive to repentance is, that, under the gospel dispensation, it is the work of the Spirit. The prophet Zechariah thus describes the influences of the Spirit as bringing men to repentance, and as

affording them the most powerful motives to its performance, Zech. xii. 9, 10. “It shall come
“ to pass in that day, that I will pour upon
“ the house of David, and upon the inhabi-
“ tants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and
“ of supplications, and they shall look upon
“ me whom they have pierced, and shall
“ mourn.” Indeed, it would be but poor encouragement to one who was sufficiently acquainted with his own heart, to tell him that he must work out his repentance himself.—He would find, that, to subdue the corruptions which were within him, to support the assaults of the evil one, to withstand the temptations of the world, required greater strength and patience than he possessed. But, when he is assured, that, a divine, invisible assistant is, ever, near at hand ready to support him, and, that, God worketh in him both to will and to do of his good pleasure ; then he proceeds with boldness and alacrity, at the same time that he worketh out his salvation with fear and trembling. Besides, the very fear of resisting the means of salvation, of grieving the Holy Ghost, of doing despite unto the Spirit of grace, and of contemning the offers of God, must dispose him to comply with the gracious designs of the gospel.

III. We shall now conclude this discourse with a few observations connected with the subject, and, chiefly, arising from what has been said.

1. In the first place, we are, fully, entitled to draw this inference ; that, the impenitent are wholly without excuse. What more could God have done to bring us to repentance, than he has done ? What stronger motives could he have afforded us ? He hath assured us of success, he hath fully revealed to us our duty, he hath given his Son to die for us, and his Spirit to convert us : if, after all, we continue impenitent, our ruin must be charged, solely, on ourselves. And our condemnation will be more terrible than if we had never enjoyed the advantages which the gospel bestows.—The very heathens will condemn us. The men of Nineveh will rise up in judgment against us : they repented at the preaching of Jonah ; but God hath, in these last days, spoken unto us by a greater than Jonah, even his own Son. “ Wo to thee, Chorazin ! wo unto thee, Bethsaida ! for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.” For, if

we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries.

2. Although repentance be chiefly employed to denote that change which takes place at the first conversion of the sinner unto God, yet it is not confined to that, nor can it be considered as finished when that is accomplished. Repentance is that divine seed which abideth in the christian, and which bringeth forth fruit by influencing his whole character and conduct. Indeed, those who are truly sensible of the corruption of their own hearts, will find, that they, daily, stand in need of repentance. They cannot, it is true, stand in need of it in the sense in which they first repented (for it is impossible that those who have tasted of the heavenly gift should fall away); but, in this imperfect state of things, where they are liable to so many failings through the temptations which surprise them to sin, through remaining ignorance, and through the infirmities which compass them about; they ought continually, by an impartial self-examination, to find out these feelings, to regret them hum-

bly, and to set themselves in opposition to them : still aspiring to higher measures of perfection ; or, as the apostle Paul speaks, “ leaving those things which are behind, and “ reaching forth to those things which are “ before.”

3. Repentance is a duty which, from its very nature, cannot be delayed. For, as it includes a thorough change of heart, and a return to the practice of obedience, the longer it is put off, the less perfect must it necessarily be. And if it be postponed to the bed of death, it will be entirely unavailing. Sorrow of the heart, confessions of sin, and purposes of amendment, (which are the common resources of that spirit who is, soon, to stand, unembodied, before his God) are but a small part of repentance, and are very far from rendering it complete. This ruinous system of delay is the most common and the most fatal mistake into which it is possible to fall. There is not a man upon the earth who is entirely devoid of a sense of religion, and who purposes not, one day or another, to work out his salvation. All men, however loose in their principles, however profligate in their lives, intend not to continue always so. They are resolved, at

some convenient season, to amend their lives : let them but indulge in sin and pleasure to-day, and to-morrow they will bid them an eternal adieu. But it is to-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow, till their feet stumble on the dark mountains, and the shadows of the everlasting evening encompass them about. Death shuts up the scene ; the term of their probation is finished ; the day of salvation is over, and they are not saved.

This error is not confined to the inexperience of early life, when the hope of length of days might lead us to think, that, there is, yet, sufficient time to repent ; it is equally strong in riper years, and we hasten not more to repent, even when bending over the tomb. The same lying spirit which deceived us at twenty, continues to speak peace at threescore and ten years. Very different from this was the conduct of that young man whose return to virtue has given rise to this discourse. When he came to a better mind, and saw his real situation, he did not sit down to weep and lament at the wretchedness of his condition, but, instantly, came to this determination, “ I will arise and go to my father.” Neither did he let his religion evaporate in empty resolutions ;

he started no objections, and made no delays, but straightway “arose and came to his father.”

What are the causes of your delay? Are you ashamed to repent? You have indeed good reason to be ashamed of your crimes, and of having so long persisted in them; but never blush for returning to virtue. It indicates more true greatness of soul to confess your faults, and return to your duty, than never to have transgressed. Are you afraid of the ridicule and contempt of your companions? Do you dread the malice and reproaches of an ill-judging world? Do you suppose that those sins which are blotted out of the book of God’s remembrance are not forgotten by them?—With these things, perhaps, you will meet in your return to duty. But what think you of the opinion of God, who is also the witness of your actions, and who will soon be the judge and rewarder of your conduct? What think you of the love and approbation of every good man? What think you of the desires of the just made perfect, who are eager to enrol you among the number of the blessed? What think you of the applauses of angels and of archangels who are waiting to break out into new allelujahs of joy on your return?

Do you think that the work of repentance is difficult, and cannot be accomplished without much pain and sorrow of heart ? It is difficult. It will cost you much labour and many a pang. But will it become easier by being delayed ? If you persist in iniquity ; if you allow your passions to take root, and your evil habits to gather strength, then, indeed, repentance will not only be difficult, but almost impossible. To forsake your sins, and return unto God will be as the cutting off of a right hand, or the plucking out of a right eye.—The present, then, is the most proper time for repentance. It is less difficult now, than it will be at any future period. Now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation. The God of mercy and compassion is ready to receive you. The Spirit helpeth your infirmities. Make haste, therefore, to draw near unto God. You stand upon a precipice ; the earth moulders under your feet : fly, or you are lost for ever.

Lastly, to excite you farther to the practice of this duty, and to give weight to every thing which has been said, let me remind you, that, God hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness by that man

whom he hath ordained : wherein you must give an account of your conduct ; and wherein those sins which you have committed, and of which you have not repented, will appear along with you before the tribunal of your God. You cannot live always : of this the experience of others, and the infirmities engendered by the latent principle of death within you, give you sufficient warning. The world itself exists but for a season. The silent lapse of ages, and the gradual decay of nature, announce, in sad and solemn language, that awful period when the works of nature and of art shall all be dissolved. A few ages and generations more having passed away, that day, at length, arrives for which all other days have revolved ; that great day when this earthly scene of things shall be finally closed : when the mighty plan of providence shall be unfolded : when the corrupt shall be separated from the worthy, and each shall receive the fruit of his labour. Then shall heaven open wide its everlasting doors : and behold the Judge cometh in clouds ; every eye shall see him ; and you who, daily, pierce him by your sins and your ungodly lives, shall, sadly, mourn in dismay and anguish. He is, no longer, that

weak and helpless mortal who wept at Bethel, and who suffered upon Calvary. The reed is now turned into a sceptre, and the crown of thorns into a crown of glory. He appears in the glory of his Father : clothed with the splendour of divinity, and attended with the host of heaven. Before him who was once dragged as a criminal to the judgment seat of Pilate, the whole world is assembled. The great tribunal is erected : the books are opened : sentence is pronounced on every man. Down to the prison of everlasting darkness and despair, the wicked are driven, where, bound in chains, they suffer in the flames of that lake whose smoke ascendeth for ever and ever : while the righteous ascend with their Lord, to be put in possession of those happy mansions prepared for them before the foundation of the world.

I conclude in the words of St. Peter.—
“ Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to
“ be in all holy conversation and godliness.”
Amen !

SERMÓN IV.

On the uncertainty and awfulness of death ; preparation for it to be found only in the conscientious practice of christian duties.

1 THESS. CHAP. 5, VER. 2.

“ The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.”

RELIGION bears the same proportion to every human pursuit that eternity does to the short space of threescore and ten years. The concerns of this life soon have an end : at death our connection with the world ceases for ever : when we descend into the tomb, the cares and schemes and business and pleasures and hopes of this life cannot follow us : there the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest : the ties and relations and dependencies of society are for ever dissolved : there the servant is free from his master, and the prisoner hears not the voice of the oppressor. But religion has no end ; it reaches

into eternity ; it goes with us into another life, and influences our state of existence beyond the grave. How comes it, then, that we are so much attached to the things of this life, and prosecute them with so great an ardour and so unremitting an assiduity, while the objects of religion occupy so small a share of our attention, and so seldom excite one anxious thought or desire ? This question has raised the attention of every thinking man, and moralists and divines of every age have found it difficult to give it a rational solution ; and, indeed, it must, for ever, continue to perplex them, because, the conduct being irrational and absurd, it is impossible to discover causes fully adequate to the effect. Some causes, however, have been discovered, and the time spent in inquiring into them, has not been misemployed, because, the more we are acquainted with the nature of the disease, the nearer we approach to a knowledge of the remedy.

One cause, which seems to have great effect in procuring to earthly things an attention so disproportioned to their value, appears to be the difficulty, or rather, the impossibility of ascertaining their true and exact importance.—

The duration of life and its affairs is uncertain ; the period of death is to us unknown. It cometh, as the Apostle expresses it, “ like a “ thief in the night,” who gives no warning of his approach, whose coming cannot be foreseen, but, always, takes place when men think not of it. If we knew the number of those hours and days which were appointed to us, then, we could calculate the precise value of every human pursuit, and adapt our projects and business to the time they were to last.— But a knowledge of the future is wisely withheld from mortals ; and the fatal moment marked out for the hour of their departure, is a secret written in that eternal book which the Lamb alone has a right to open. If this moment were pointed out to every one of us, if, when we came into life, we had written on our foreheads the number of our years, and the term fixed for their close, then the thoughts of death, in certain approach, would wholly occupy our attention, would disturb our minds, and trouble our repose. The image of death, ever present to our minds, would embitter our pleasures, disgust us with the affairs of the world, and render us unfit for the business and the duties of society. The day or the hour,

therefore, knoweth no man. But this uncertainty of death's approach, while it contributes so much to our happiness, and is so necessary to carry forward human affairs, tends, also, to bewilder our judgment, and to attach us strongly to worldly objects. It amuses our mind, and takes off our thoughts from reflecting on that period when they shall cease to be interesting. We are left in doubt and suspense : we know not where to place death in the different stages of our life : our vigilance is thus lulled asleep ; and, because it is not certain that we shall die to-day, we act as if we were to live for ever. I beg leave, therefore, at present, to direct your attention to this subject ; while I consider a little the uncertainty of death, and endeavour to show the reasonableness of this conclusion ; that, instead of attaching us to the things of the world, this uncertainty of death and life ought to excite us to watchfulness, and to a preparation for eternity. Do not suppose that the subject is unworthy of your attention, because it is neither new nor uncommon, and because you already know or have already heard every thing which can be said. It's being common, shows it's importance : and it is your fault, not the fault

of the preacher, that it needs so often to be repeated. If you had made a proper use of those instructions which you have received on former occasions, it would not, now, have been necessary for me to address you.

1. Let it be observed that it is only the *period* of death which is uncertain ; the thing itself is absolutely certain, and cannot be escaped. There is no man who liveth, that shall not see death. The first step which we make into life, likewise carries us a step forward to the grave. The irrevocable sentence, “dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return,” is passed upon every man : and, as if it were a crime to live, it is enough that we live, so as to be worthy to die. On the day of our birth, death lays siege to our vital frame ; he assails us in various forms, and by various calamities, accidents, and diseases ; he carries on his attacks throughout the whole of life : day after day we yield to his assaults, till at length we surrender to his irresistible power. And, not only is death certain, but his approaches are near and rapid. No art can stop or arrest, in their course, those winged moments which hasten, with unstaying speed, to number us with the inhabitants of the tomb.

This was not our original destination. The Authour of our nature, at first, animated our bodies with the breath of immortality. He put within us a principle of life which was so vigorous that it would have defied the revolution of times and of years ever to have destroyed or weakened it's force, and contrived with so much skill, that, nothing foreign to itself could interrupt it's harmony. But sin destroyed this divine principle, and overturned this happy order. Death followed close upon it's steps. Adam became mortal as soon as he became a sinner. By sin, says the Apostle, death entered into the world. When death is thus certain and inevitable, what should attach us to life, or lead us to a forgetfulness of our last hour? If only a few men were exposed to the stroke of death; if it might or might not happen, there could be some room for doubt and suspense: but in such a situation as the present, what image should be more familiar to our thoughts than that of death? The criminal who is condemned to die, wherever he turns his eyes, sees nothing but the dreadful apparatus for his execution. Whether we have a longer or shorter time to live, it makes not, surely, so great a difference

that we should ever consider ourselves as immortal.

The period of death, it must be confessed, is uncertain. The ravages of this spoiler are confined to no stage of life. He is equally an enemy to the bloom of youth, and the hoary head of old age. Some seem born, but to die, and like the flowers which wither as soon as they are blossomed, just open their eyes to the light, look about them, and then drop into the dark mansion of the grave. Others are stopt in the middle of their course ; and, while yet flourishing in youth and vigour, like the king of Judah, seek in vain for the remainder of their days. Others grow up in peace to a good old age ; see their offspring flourishing around them, and spreading their branches far and near ; and, heirs of the blessings of ancient times, descend, by slow and easy steps, into the house appointed for all living. But, if self-love and sanguine expectations did not deceive us, this uncertainty, instead of lulling us asleep, is the very thing which should lead us to watch without ceasing. Should a misfortune which *may* happen every day be more disregarded than that which *will* happen only at the end of a certain period of time ? Should

we possess our souls in peace as if we were never to lose them, when they may be demanded of us every moment ? A danger which is always near makes attention the more necessary. In the common affairs of life, we would be at no loss how to act in this case : but, in matters of religion, there seems to be a fatal stupidity attached to the soul which prevents us from making a right use of our faculties. The conduct of that servant, in the gospel, who made use of his master's goods, as if he was no more to render an account of them, upon pretence that his Lord delayed his coming, and that he knew not the hour of his arrival, must appear to every man the greatest folly and imprudence. These things were written for our instruction. Such motives as these does Jesus make use of to awaken our diligence, and to cause us to regard the things which belong to our peace, ere they be for ever hid from our eyes. " Be ye therefore ready also," said he, " for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not."

2. We ought, constantly, to be on our guard, and in a state of preparation for death, because otherwise we shall inevitably meet with a fatal

surprise. This is not one of those rare and uncommon accidents which a regard to our own peace of mind makes it more prudent to despise than to provide against. Vain are the terrors of those who live in continual fear, that, the thunder will come forth to blast their devoted heads ; that an earthquake will bury them in the ruins of their habitations, or that the shipwreck shall consign them to the watery tomb. The singularity of these calamities makes them terrible, but at the same time the less to be dreaded. The surprise of death, on the other hand, is perfectly familiar to us. Every day affords us examples of it. Almost all men have seen the tyrant approach to claim them as the subjects of his dominion, when they still believed him at a great distance : and, with all their attachment to life remaining, with all their strong passions unconquered, and with all their extensive projects unfinished, they have seen some hurried into the land of silence. This was the fate of that rich man in the parable, (Luke xii. 20) whose ground brought forth plentifully, who pulled down his barns and built greater, and who said to his soul, “Soul thou hast much goods laid up for
“ many days : take thine ease, eat, drink, and

“be merry.” But God said unto him, “thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee ; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided ?” But we need, only, look to those of our relations, and friends, and acquaintances who have gone before us to the world of souls, and this truth will be brought nearer to ourselves. They have almost all quitted the stage suddenly and unexpectedly. We have been surprised at the quickness of their death : we have sought for the causes of it in the want of assistance, in the imprudence of the patient, or the unskilfulness of the physician ; but the true and proper reason is this, that “the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night.” Human life is an unceasing warfare. To-day we may have escaped from the fight ; but we have seen many fall by our side, who expected, as well as we, to come home in safety. We must return to the field to-morrow : there is no rest in this combat ; and, if fortune has been unfavourable to others, we cannot suppose that it will be always favourable to us alone. One day we must fall in this battle, and, surely, it must be the height of folly, to indulge in security, or to build a settled habitation on that spot where others will soon dig our tomb.

It is impossible to suppose a situation in which death may not surprise us, or in which some of our fellow men have not been cut off from the land of the living. When the fatal mandate is issued, no rank, nor power, nor riches can retain the breath in its mansion.— No force can resist the arm; no flattery can sooth the dull cold ear of death. Herod gave up the ghost amidst the shouts of his courtiers who styled him a god. Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain on that night which he set apart for revelry, while drinking and carousing among his princes, and his wives, and his concubines. The conqueror of the world, after having braved the dangers of war, and trod the path of glory in safety, was struck by the unseen hand of death, when seated at a sumptuous banquet. How many have fallen asleep to wake no more ! How many has the scythe of intemperance swept away in the moment of gratification ! How often do the slightest maladies baffle the skill of the physician and the cares of the patient ! How innumerable are the accidents which may prove the boundary of our days ! Death's thousand doors, through which life may issue forth, perpetually stand open. Nothing, then, can

secure us from a state of surprise, but a state of constant preparation, or, as our Lord expresses it, to have our loins girt, and our lights burning, and to be like those who wait for the coming of their Lord. Of this truth all men pretend to be convinced. What fatality, then, O ye deluded race ! for ever prevents you from taking a single precaution to secure yourselves from danger ?

3. The uncertainty of death becomes highly important, and ought to excite us to constant and serious attention, when we reflect, that, it involves in it not only the time, the place, and the manner of death, but likewise the condition of our souls at that awful moment. If we die in the Lord and fall asleep in Jesus, every other thing is of little importance. It is the wish, indeed, of every man (and the sage and the philosopher will never be able to eradicate it from our breasts) to have his eyes closed by some friendly hand, even when the name of friend or of kinsman is interesting no more ; and to have some memorial erected on his grave to protect his bones from insult. But the great question is, whether we shall die in a state of reconciliation with God, or with all our sins and imperfections on

our heads? What will be the condition of our souls in that other world where the state of every man is unalterably fixed? into what hands shall we fall, when we have left this tenement of clay? whether shall we be conveyed by blessed spirits into the bosom of Abraham, or be dragged by accursed fiends into the prison of everlasting darkness and despair?

I do not say that it is impossible to obtain, even in this life, such hope and assurance of glory as will smooth the bed of death, and calm the terrors of the last hour. But, surely, the best way to get rid of such terrors, is to be prepared for them, and the most effectual way to add strength to them, is, in thoughtfulness and security, to let death approach, as if it were to determine nothing in which we are concerned. Upon the supposition that death was nothing, and that there was nothing after death, then there might be some foundation for this resolution of the wicked man, “let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die:” because it would be his interest to enjoy present life as much as possible. But, when the gospel reveals to us a state of everlasting rewards and punishment beyond the grave, how

different should our language be. “ Let us
“ be up and be doing, let us be providing for
“ eternity, let us be laying up treasure in hea-
“ ven, for to-morrow we die, and there is no
“ work nor device in the grave.” This is the
awful crisis of our fate : it must be folly, it
must be madness, to be unconcerned about
this decisive moment, or to be unemployed in
preparing, by a lively faith, against that trou-
ble and anxiety which it must necessarily
produce.

4. The uncertainty of death is different
from every uncertainty in life, not only in
point of importance, but also in its nature. In
the calamities which may surprise us in this
life, the number of those who will probably
suffer along with us gives us encouragement ;
the resources which we may possess leave us ea-
sy ; at the worst, the surprise we meet with teach-
es us to be more on our guard for the future.
But in that terrible uncertainty which we are
considering, the number of those who run the
same risk with ourselves, does not in the least
diminish our danger. It is often so sudden,
that it leaves us no resources ; and even those
resources which are resorted to, when leisure
is granted, are commonly vain and deceitful.

In short, the surprise of death never returns : we die but once, and we cannot turn our imprudence to account on any future occasion. Our state is immutably determined. That light which discovers to us the folly of our conduct, instead of leading us to repentance, will only stir up that worm which never dies, and kindle that flame whose smoke ascendeth for ever and ever.

When these considerations have been duly attended to, I may be allowed to ask, upon what pretence men can possibly justify that security and profound forgetfulness of their last hour in which the greatest part of mankind live ? Do you build upon *youth* which seems to promise you a length of days ? Go to the repositories of mortality, and be undeceived. You will there find death to be the *land without order*, where youth, and manhood, and old age are indiscriminately mingled, and equally rest together in silence. Indeed, youth is that uncertain period of life in which death is most to be dreaded. In that tender age, the constitution is not yet hardened by maturity, or accustomed to disease : and the storm which in vain assails the oak of the mountain, will blast, in a moment, the opening blossom of the

spring. Besides, this is the season of danger : the passions are strong and violent : the excesses are frequent and dangerous : experience has not yet cooled the desires, or taught them, that poison is mingled in the cup of gratification : now the blood boils in the veins at the call of ambition, and the heart beats high at the voice of glory : now danger surrounds us in a thousand shapes, and the spoiler is ever ready for his prey.

Do you trust in the health which you enjoy, and in the power of your constitution ? Consider the enemy with whom you have to combat. The best established health is but a spark which the blast of death can in a moment extinguish. One day of distress can lay the strongest body low in the dust.

What is human life ? Is there any thing in the present scene so certain and so satisfactory, as to give you any encouragement ? Or do the changes which perpetually take place, the silent revolution of years, and the gradual decay of nature, lead your thoughts to that dreary land of desolation whither every thing seems fast hastening. Years appear long, when far from us : when arrived, they slip away and disappear in an instant : when pas-

sed, they are as a vision of the night, or as a tale which has been told. Let us look behind us. Is the world the same that we have seen it in former days ? No : every thing is altered ; those who once occupied the principal stations in society, are gone to another land, and have left their places to successors : men formerly unknown are exalted into view, and now attract the attention of the world. Even within our own narrow sphere, every thing wears an aspect different from what it once did. The friends of our youth are passed into the region of forgetfulness, or are for ever separated from us by their connections in life.—The tender buds of hope, which we reared with so fond an hand, are nipped by the killing frost of disappointment. Those projects and schemes, which we formerly pursued with pleasure, are now laid aside. New ideas prevail ; new occupations engage our attention ; new passions rouse us to action. A new world is gradually springing up, and the old is gradually sinking into ruins. Year follows year with unceasing change. The fashion of all things passeth away. One generation goeth, and another cometh. Our fathers left the stage to-day, and we shall leave it to-mor-

row. Nothing is at rest. Every thing changes, decays, and perishes. God, alone, remains the same. This fleeting scene passes before his eyes, and he beholds, with pity and indignation, the infatuated children of men neglecting and insulting his present goodness and forbearance, and, at length, falling into the hands of his wrath and vengeance.

I shall now conclude with stating that inference, the truth of which it has been the great object of this discourse to establish ; namely, that, since the hour of death is uncertain, we ought to put no value on the things of this life, but prefer religion to every other concern, and set our affections on things above. By these means, alone, can we be in a state of constant preparation.

What folly must it be, my friends, to attach yourselves to what may not last for a single day, and to lose for it that good which never perisheth ! You should consider all the pains which you bestow upon the pursuits of this life as lost, because you are never sure that you will reap the fruit of your labour. But the rewards of religion admit of no uncertainty, and, in themselves, ought not once to be put in the balance with the greatest temporal en-

joyment. All the kingdoms of this world, and the glories of mighty conquerors, are trifles light as air, when compared with the smallest possible happiness, the duration of which is eternal. Your eager pursuit of worldly objects cannot secure to you a long life ; but it will aggravate your sorrow and regret, when between you and them an impassable gulf is fixed. Let the great business of your lives, therefore, be to lay up treasure in heaven.— Religion alone is worthy of your care. Nothing else deserves one anxious thought or desire. “ Secure this, and you have secured every thing ; lose this, and all is lost.”

SERMON V.

PART I.

On the atonement : its nature and the purposes which are effected by it, in exalting the glory of God, and securing the happiness of man.

1 COR. CHAP. 1, VER. 18.

“ For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness ; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God.”

THE doctrine of the cross was to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness ; but to you, my friends, I hope it is the wisdom and the power of God. The Jews had read the prophecies, which their own writings contained, concerning that great personage who was to come into the world ; they had studied the descriptions of the glory of the latter days ; and, in their minds high expectations were raised concerning the Redeemer of Israel. But they mistook the true nature and

interpretation of these predictions ; and feeling as they did the severity of Roman oppression, they wished and hoped and believed that the Messiah, who was foretold to their fathers, would appear in all the splendour of majesty and power, would go forth conquering and to conquer, would subdue all the nations of the earth to himself, and would drag the subjugated nations captive at the wheels of his chariot. How much, then, must they have been disappointed in Jesus, who, instead of being born of a great and powerful family, appeared in the humble character of a carpenter's son, and who, instead of laying claim to the throne of his fathers, plainly declared that his kingdom was not of this world. The proud, fastidious, and self-conceited Jews, hid their faces from one who pretended to be their deliverer, but whom they saw to be without form or comeliness, and whom they beheld in poverty and distress, wandering about from place to place, without habitation, or having where to lay his head. But what still more offended their foolish vain-glory, was the last scene of his life ; when he was dragged as a malefactor before the tribunal of a foreign governor, and at length put to death on the igno-

minious tree. On their national pride they made shipwreck of their faith. It was contrary to their pre-conceived notions, it was degrading to their country to believe, that, one who had been considered as unworthy to live, and who had been crucified between two thieves, was the Saviour of the world.

Prejudices of a different kind operated on the minds of the Greeks. They were a learned, refined, luxurious and corrupted people. They expected, that, their Saviour should, at least, possess superiour wisdom and learning, and display superiour taste and politeness.—What, then, must they have thought of Jesus, when they perceived the plainness and simplicity of his discourses and instructions, which, in their opinion, bordered on foolishness ; which were so unlike those “ words of man’s “ wisdom,” and so different from that ostentatious display of knowledge, that sophistry and science, falsely so called, to which they had been accustomed in the schools of their philosophers ? They could not relish his meek and unaffected manners ; they could not admire his discourses, which, plainly and simply, explained the truth without study or ornament ; they despised his moral instructions

which wanted the air and the abstraction of science, and which were suggested in the most natural and easy manner by the objects around him, by the lilies of the field which grew under his feet, and by the fowls of heaven which flew over his head. Among the heathens, it must also be observed, crucifixion was a punishment inflicted only on the vilest criminals; and, consequently, they could scarcely be brought to give a hearing to men who began with declaring that their Master died upon a cross.

Innumerable, then, were the prejudices and obstacles which were to be surmounted by the christian religion, in which the doctrine of the cross was the fundamental article. But notwithstanding these difficulties, it soon overthrew all opposition : wherever the Apostles preached Christ crucified, they met with a success which plainly showed that their religion was from God, and not from man. At the appearance of the gospel, the Pagan religions every where fell into contempt ; and the religion of that humble personage who had suffered so ignominious a death was, in a few years, known and believed throughout all the regions of the civilized world.

The immediate cause of such rapid and unexpected success was, undoubtedly, the overruling providence of its great Authour: but, besides this, the religion itself was excellently adapted to the condition and circumstances of man, and carried its own recommendation along with it, in that remedy which it provided for the guilt and degeneracy of human nature. Even the doctrine of the cross could not appear foolishness, or be a stumbling block to any, when every circumstance concerning it was, properly, explained. For when men are told that Jesus suffered and died upon a cross, in order to make an atonement for the sins of mankind: when they are assured that that same Jesus who was crucified and slain, rose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, and will come again to judge the quick and the dead, all prejudices must vanish, and all men must be disposed to confess, that “this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”

The text (1 Cor. i. 18) presents to our consideration two important ideas. The first is the *preaching of the cross*, that is, of the atonement for sin which Christ made by his suffer-

ings and death upon the cross. The second is, the *effect* of this doctrine, namely, that it is *the power of God* to those who are saved. I shall attempt,

I. To explain the *nature* of Christ's atonement for sin, and

II. To illustrate the *purposes* which the doctrine of salvation by Christ's atonement answers, that we may be able to infer the truth and meaning of the Apostle's assertion, that the preaching of the cross is the power of God to those who are saved.

We begin with explaining the *nature* of Christ's atonement : an important and interesting subject to which I solicit your attention, as it is the foundation of what follows when we come to the consideration of those great purposes which it is calculated to effect.

Man, by his disobedience, had forfeited his title to eternal life, had incurred the penalty pronounced against sin, and had rendered himself obnoxious to the divine wrath and displeasure. The justice of God required, that sin should not pass unpunished ; his holiness excluded the impure sinner from his favour and enjoyment ; and his truth made it necessary, that, the punishment which was threat-

ened should be inflicted. All seemed now lost ; man must perish without hope, and be for ever separated from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power.

But long before days began to be numbered, and hours began to roll, even from eternity, it was decreed in the counsels of the Almighty to deliver man from going down to the pit, and to prevent the total ruin of the human race. Mercy interceded for us and implored our deliverance from punishment ; but Justice interposed her voice and called aloud for that satisfaction which was due to the divine attribute. How, then, was a ransom to be found that would satisfy the demands of Justice, and at the same time allow room for the exercise of Mercy. This ransom man could not provide himself, for the thoughts of his heart were only evil continually : and even though it had been in his power to repent and return unto God, yet this could have been of no avail. A return to obedience, though it may be accepted as a part of our duty, can never be considered as any compensation for the previous omission of it : and sorrow of the heart can be of no account with God, who delighteth not in the misery of his creatures.—

Indeed, no angel, no created being, however pure and exalted, could make any atonement for sin. For, as creatures, they must owe obedience on their own account ; and, though a new nature and new powers were conferred, yet the duties and obligations resulting from them would also be binding, and consequently they could never perform an obedience, the merit of which could be imputed to another. But the eternal Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, when there was no eye which could pity, nor hand which could help, offered himself to undertake this arduous task. “ Lo, I come,” said he to his Father ; “ in the “ volume of thy book, it is written of me, I “ delight to do thy will.” For him a body was prepared ; when the fulness of time was come, he assumed this body, he veiled that glory which he had enjoyed from eternity with the Father, he descended into our abodes of sorrow, he was made of a woman, and made under the law, he became the substitute of sinners, and though he did no sin, and though no guile was found in him, yet was he numbered among the transgressors. But he has satisfied the demands of divine justice, and made a complete atonement for the sins of men.

This atonement consists of *two* parts, his sufferings and his obedience. The first was necessary to deliver the sinner from eternal destruction ; the second, to purchase for him an eternal inheritance.

Jesus Christ having taken upon himself the guilt of sinners, likewise submitted to their punishment. From the day of his birth to the day of his death, he lived in poverty, distress and suffering. He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. But towards the close of his life, his sufferings increased with redoubled violence. In the garden of Gethsemane, he sweated great drops of blood, and gave signs of the inexpressible anguish and agony of soul which he endured, by praying to his Father in these words, “ Father, if it be possible, let “ this cup pass from me.” His soul was exceedingly sorrowful even unto death : his body was racked and torn upon the cross. But these were the least part of his sufferings.— He groaned under that immense load of wrath which was due to millions of sinners : the powers of hell combined against him in this hour of darkness : his heavenly Father withdrew from him the light of his countenance,

for, amidst his exquisite sufferings, he exclaimed, “ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?” At last, he said *it is finished*, and gave up the ghost.

The *second* part of Christ’s atonement consists in that perfect obedience which he gave to the law in the room and for the sake of sinners. His sufferings and death are called his *passive* obedience, and his obedience to the law his *active* obedience. This was a necessary part of his atonement : because a perfect and sinless obedience being required by the law, and being a requisite condition for obtaining eternal life, the law could never have been satisfied, nor eternal life obtained, unless this obedience, which we were perfectly incapable of performing ourselves, had been given by another, and made ours by imputation. Thus the Apostle Paul expressly says, Rom. v. 19. “ As by one man’s disobedience, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, many shall be made righteous.” The meaning of which appears to be, that, as the disobedience of Adam, who was the federal head and representative of his posterity, by being imputed to them, made them all guilty, in like manner, the obedience of Christ, being

a part of his atonement, and being imputed to his followers, makes them righteous in the sight of God, and gives them a title to eternal life no less sure than if they had performed that obedience in their own person. But, it must be remembered, that, Christ obeyed the law in place of his people, only as it was to be considered as the condition of eternal happiness, and not as a rule for the direction of their conduct. In the former light, christians are exempted from all obedience ; in the latter, they are laid under stronger obligations to it. Christ's sufferings and obedience, then, make that complete robe of righteousness which covers every defect in the person who is clothed with it, which redeems him from the curse of the law and the dominion of sin, which reconciles him to God, and which gives him a title to the heavenly inheritance.

Having thus stated the *constituent* parts of the atonement, let us shortly consider its value. The sufferings of Jesus Christ were equal in amount to that punishment which otherwise would have been endured by those who derive the benefit of them. He was made *sin* and a *curse* for them ; he was wounded for their transgressions, and bruised for their iniquities ;

he bore their griefs and carried their sorrows ; he was compassed about with the pains of hell. While the scriptures authorize us to infer, that, the punishment was translated from the sinner to Christ ; they give us not the smallest intimation of any change in the nature of the punishment. But it is plain that when we say so, we mean to include only the essential parts of punishment, and not those circumstances with which it has but an accidental connection. Jesus could never feel that despair which is the constant attendant of the damned, which is a great aggravation of their misery, but which is the necessary consequence of their situation, and which arises from this circumstance, that their sufferings shall have no end. In like manner, it was not necessary that the sufferings of Christ should be eternal, because the eternal duration of the pains of hell does not arise from the punishment itself, but from the inability of the sufferer to discharge his debt, which prevents him from being released until he has paid the utmost farthing.

Secondly, Christ's atonement was infinite in value. This is evident, if we consider the infinite guilt of sin for which the atonement was

made, and the infinite dignity of the person who atoned. Among men, the degree of guilt increases in proportion to the dignity of the person against whom the crime is committed. A crime committed against a private individual does not infer an equal degree of guilt with the same crime when committed against a public magistrate. By the same rule of judging, the guilt of sin which is committed against God, must be carried up to the height of his perfections. From this we conclude that it is infinite, that it's punishment is also infinite, and that nothing less than an infinite satisfaction could be accepted in its room. Farther, as every action of an infinite being must be infinite, so likewise must the atonement of Christ be in whom the *divine* was united to the *human* nature. It was the *blood of God* which was shed upon the cross; for the Apostle Paul says, Acts xx. 28, "that God hath purchased the church with his own blood." The reason of this manner of expression seems to be, that, as the union of the two natures was such as to constitute only one individual person, whatever is true or can be asserted concerning the human nature, is also true, and may be asserted concerning the

divine. In the striking language of some divines, the divine nature was the *altar* which gave an infinite worth and dignity to the *sacrifice* of the human nature which was offered upon it.

Thirdly, Christ's atonement was perfect and sufficient for the salvation of all those for whom it was designed. He suffered and obeyed till justice could demand no more. This may be inferred from the infinite value of his atonement, and from it's being the same in substance with the punishment due to the sinner : for what satisfaction could be demanded greater than what was infinite, or what right could there be to demand, after all that was owing had been paid ? This perfect sufficiency is also apparent from innumerable passages in scripture. In Heb. x. 14, we are told "that
"by one offering of himself, Christ hath for
"ever perfected those who are sanctified :"
And the same Apostle declares, Rom. viii. 1,
" that there is now no condemnation to those
" who are in Christ Jesus. Why ? because
" God, sending his own Son in the likeness of
" sinful flesh, condemned sin in the flesh."—
The perfection of Christ's atonement appears most evidently from his resurrection. By rais-

ing him from the dead, God declared himself satisfied with what he had done ; he accepted of it for an atonement : and, by so doing, he virtually justified all his followers.

Thus have we, in a few words, explained the nature and value of that atonement which Christ made for sin. As a scheme of salvation, very different from this, has of late years become fashionable, it might not be thought unnecessary to prove that the doctrine which has been stated is the true doctrine of scripture, and to confute the objections brought against it by its adversaries. At present, however, I shall not enter upon this subject, which is highly intricate, and certainly somewhat foreign to this place, where men ought to be taught how to be virtuous and happy, and not how to dispute and distinguish ; but proceed to what is of more general utility, viz. to show the excellence of the doctrine of atonement by illustrating the important purposes which it is calculated to serve. This is the *second* head of discourse ; and we shall discuss it at another opportunity. At present, we conclude with observing, that though there were many difficulties and many things incomprehensible, (as there certainly are) in the doc-

trine of atonement, we would still act a most irrational part in denying it's truth. We would consider that man as deluded by folly who should receive a pardon when he was about to suffer death, and yet should reject it, because he could not understand how it could be obtained, or could possibly be intended for him. But we are fools in a far greater degree, if on account of some learned subtilties, and metaphysical intricacies, we deny the truth of a doctrine which is pregnant with the most solid comfort and joy, though we have the plainest *moral* evidence for it's certainty ; a sort of evidence which, in every other case, is a sure light to our feet, and a lamp to our path.

SERMON VI.

PART II.

On the atonement.

1 COR. CHAP. 1, VER. 18.

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God.”

IN a former discourse, we proposed, from these words of the Apostle,

I. To explain the *nature* of Christ’s atonement for sin, which doctrine the Apostle calls “the preaching of the cross.”

II. To illustrate the *purposes* which the doctrine of salvation by Christ’s atonement answers, that we may be able to infer the meaning and truth of the Apostle’s assertion, that “the preaching of the cross is the power of God to those who are saved.”

Having, already, made a few observations on the first head, we shall now proceed to

point out those purposes which the atonement of Christ is calculated to serve.

1. The atonement is highly glorifying to God, and displays all the perfections of his nature in the brightest manner. The scheme of salvation opposed to the doctrine of atonement greatly extols one of his attributes, but it is derogatory from the perfection of the others.— Goodness, indeed, seems to be the most amiable perfection in the divine character, and, certainly, the one best suited to the present low and guilty state of human nature : but a God all mercy is a being of injustice and imperfection. In how different a light does the doctrine of atonement represent the Supreme Being ? While it does justice to his mercy, it gives every other attribute it's due share of praise. In Jesus Christ they all harmonize and unite. “ Truth and mercy are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” None of them are limited in their exercise, but all of them are magnified and made honourable. This is so obvious, at first sight, that farther proof of it's truth is unnecessary ; but, the subject is too pleasing, too grand, and too interesting, not to require a more full discussion.

First of all, love and goodness shine forth most conspicuously. From these the whole of our redemption originated. We had no claim upon God ; he would have been no loser, though we had suffered that eternal exclusion from his presence which our sins deserved ; heaven would not have wanted inhabitants, nor God have wanted praise, though the whole of Adam's sinful race had been blotted out from the book of existence. But God so loved the world that he sent into it his only begotten Son. Herein was love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.—Whom did he send ? His Son, his only begotten Son, his beloved Son, in whom he was, always, well pleased, the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person. A greater and a dearer gift he could not give.—And for whom was he given ? For men, for sinners, for enemies, for rebels. For them did the eternal Father cause the Son of his bosom to suffer a painful, an accursed, and an ignominious death upon a cross. Amazing and infinite love ! This is not the manner of man : it is too high, it is too wonderful for him. It is the work of “God who is rich in mercy, and

“ who, for the great love wherewith he loved
 “ us, even when we were dead in sins, hath
 “ quickened us together with Christ, that, in the
 “ ages to come, he might shew the exceeding
 “ riches of his grace in his kindness towards us
 “ through Christ Jesus.”

The sovereignty and fulness of these favours likewise enhance their value, and magnify the love of the giver ; God passed by the angels who fell from their first state of glory, and left them to perish in that desperate condition into which they had plunged themselves ; but his countenance beamed with compassion on the human race, when they lay in death and ruins, when there was no eye which pitied, nor hand which could bring deliverance. Christ took not on him the nature of angels, but that of the seed of Abraham. This shows that God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and compassion on whom he will have compassion. The sacred writers dwell, with delight and admiration, on that goodness and free grace which God has displayed in the redemption of the world ; but with how much greater rapture will they be celebrated by the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem, who will be put in full possession of the blessings arising

from them, which at present it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive.

The love of the Son, in the execution of the plan of our redemption, is not less conspicuous than that of the Father in giving rise to it.—“Ye know,” says the Apostle Paul, (2 Cor. viii. 9,) “the riches of our Lord Jesus Christ, “that though he was rich, yet for our sakes “he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich.” For one who was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God : for such an one to make himself of no reputation, to take upon him the form of a servant, and to be “made “in the likeness of sinful flesh ;” and being found in fashion as a man, to humble himself, and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, and all this for the sins, in the room, and for the sake of his rebellious subjects, is an instance of love and mercy which never was nor can be equalled in the universe of God. We cannot comprehend it’s breadth or length, it’s heighth or depth. It passeth knowledge. Let us then join with the psalmist in saying, “how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that “fear thee, which thou hast wrought out for

“ them that put their trust in thee, before the
“ sons of men !”

Again, the *justice* of God is fully displayed by the atonement of Christ. Justice required satisfaction for the offences of the sinner ; the transgression of the law could not pass with impunity. By the atonement of Christ, it receives that satisfaction which it demanded : its honour is kept safe and inviolate ; it is no longer an obstacle in the way of the most unbounded goodness. This is observed by the Apostle Paul, (Romans iii. 25, 26,) when speaking of Jesus Christ, “ whom,” says he, “ God hath set forth to be a propitiation through
“ faith in his blood, to declare his righteous-
“ ness,” that is, his justice, “ that he might
“ be *just*, and the *justifier* of him who believ-
“ eth in Jesus :” that is, that he might justify and pardon the sinner consistently with his vindictive justice which required the punishment of the offence.

Farther. The doctrine of atonement manifests God’s infinite wisdom. Thus Christ is styled the *wisdom* of God, because he is so *personally*, (as in the eighth chapter of the Proverbs,) and, also, because in his sacrifice for sin this perfection is illustriously displayed.—

To decide concerning the wisdom of the divine counsels, it must be confessed, lies beyond the province and the ability of man.—The atonement, in particular, is a mystery whose depth we cannot fathom, and to attempt to comprehend it, entirely, or to explain all the reasons of adopting such a method of salvation, would be presumptuous and foolish.—But, at the same time, God has not, so far, withdrawn himself from human eyes, as not to allow room for the exercise of those faculties which he has given us, or for a modest inquiry into the reason of his ways. Thus, although many wise and important reasons for the atonement of Jesus lie hid in the bosom of the Eternal ; yet those proofs of wisdom which he has been pleased to reveal, and which lie within our comprehension, it is our duty to meditate upon and to admire. One instance of wisdom, which was far beyond the reach of men, or even the wider “ken of angels,” was the discovery of a method whereby justice might be satisfied, and mercy glorified, sin punished, and the transgressor saved. This was to effect what, to our conceptions, would, without a revelation, appear a contradiction or impossibility. It was an instance, also, of the

greatest wisdom, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sin by the same nature by which they had been introduced into the world ; to recover heaven in that form of flesh in which the title to it had been first forfeited ; and to destroy the works of the devil by that death which he had planned as the total overthrow of Christ's kingdom. The same nature which bred the mortal poison, expels it, and the stripes laid on Christ's body heal the wounds which sin had made in our soul.—When the enemies of Jesus saw him nailed to the cross, and expiring on the accursed tree, they believed their schemes crowned with the most complete success, but they were, then, more effectually promoting his interest than when they carried him in triumph, and with hosannas into Jerusalem. The counsel of God was thus fulfilled. He bringeth light out of darkness, and order out of confusion.

In short, it was an instance of consummate wisdom to appoint the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, to be Mediator. By him God made the world, and without him was not any thing made which was made.—Of every thing which he had made he had said, that it was good, but a fatal change was

soon introduced, and manifold evils abounded which threatened the total ruin of his works. He beheld, with concern, his fair creation laid waste by the cruel spoilers, sin and death, he had compassion on the works of his hands whom he saw falling a prey, one after another, to their irresistible power. How natural was it for him who had created the human race, and who took an interest in their happiness, to become their Redeemer ! How proper to snatch his subjects from destruction, and recover by purchase those who, formerly, were his own by creation !

The atonement of Christ manifests, in a striking manner, God's holiness and hatred of sin. By it's light we see, that, God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and that sin is abominable in his sight. It is evident how much injustice is done to this attribute of Deity by the scheme of salvation opposed to the doctrine of atonement. To receive a guilty sinner into favour, and an impure one into communion, is unworthy, even, of a good man ; and shall a man be more pure than his Maker ? God had already testified his holiness and his hatred of iniquity by the condemnation of the fallen angels, by the exclusion of our first pa-

rents from Paradise, by the curse entailed upon every thing, on account of their transgression, by the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, by the deluge, which destroyed the old world, and by many other signal judgments. But, in the atonement and death of Christ, his indignation against sin is more manifested than in any other of his works. Here, an infinite Being suffered, and infinite sufferings were endured. But, by these means, God's holiness is made consistent with the communication of happiness to the sinner. For, by the imputation of the merit of Christ's atonement, the guilty are made righteous in the sight of God, and, by the communication of the graces of the Spirit which he hath purchased, the impure are made spotless and holy.

We may add, that, the faithfulness of God is secured, and, indeed, illustriously displayed by the atonement. He had declared, both by the law of nature which was given to every man, and by repeated revelations, that death was the wages of sin. He had, also, promised salvation to his elect. If Christ had made no atonement, his word would not have been confirmed, his purposes would not have stood sure. But he hath now endured the punishment

threatened, he hath now purchased the salvation promised.

Lastly, the divine power is evident in the atonement. It appears both in inflicting and in bearing so great a punishment. Nothing less than infinite power could enable the human nature to support that immense load of suffering and wrath which would have overwhelmed the whole creation. God, farther, discovered his power by raising Christ from the dead, and by making his atonement powerful for the pulling down of strong holds, and for bringing many sons unto glory. Thus says the Apostle Paul: “ We preach Christ crucified, to them who are called the power of “ God.”

2. The atonement of Christ is not only glorifying to God, but it is also entirely adapted to the condition of human nature. Man had, not only, revolted from his Maker, and incurred his displeasure, but also reduced himself to a state of the greatest disorder, wretchedness, and guilt. He had lost his original righteousness, every faculty of his soul was corrupted, and it was morally impossible for him to do a good action. For those who have been accustomed to do evil, can no more learn to

do well, than the Ethiopian can change his skin, or the Leopard his spots.

In this dreadful situation, tell, ye wise and ye mighty ! what shall be done for his recovery ; where shall we find a remedy for the disease under which he labours ? “ Is there no balm in Gilead ? is there no physician there ? ” Yes : though man has destroyed himself, in *Jesus* is his help. God hath chosen a strong one from the flock ; he hath, now, visited and redeemed his people, and raised up a horn of salvation for them in the house of his servant David. By these means, alone, the salvation of man is rendered certain and infallible. For, though God had been reconciled to sinners, there was still need of one infinitely powerful to rescue them from the power of sin and the dominion of the devil. The salvation of man is now secured both as to purchase and application. He who made the atonement, and who brings men from a state of darkness into light, has likewise the government of his people, and the care of their interests intrusted to his charge. Man was once intrusted with the management of his own interests, but he was too prodigal of his store. He was once happy, but he sought out many inventions to pro-

mote his own ruin. And if he did so in a state of innocence and perfection, what would he do now, when unable to wield his armour, and yet assaulted by enemies on every hand ? He has reason to rejoice that his salvation is now in surer hands. His life is now hid with Christ in God.

Not only is the doctrine of salvation, by the atonement of Jesus, suitable to the present weak and fallen state of man, but it is also highly honourable to him. In order to make atonement, the Son of God took upon himself the human nature, and by thus uniting us to himself, has exalted us above every other created being. What glorious privileges are christians admitted to ? We who may say to the earth, *thou art our mother*, and to the worms, *ye are our sisters and brethren*, can boast of a heavenly alliance, and claim kindred with the eternal Son of God. He is our kinsman ; he is our brother ; and through him we have access unto the Father.

At the same time, this salvation which is so suitable to our state, and honourable to our nature, is accomplished in such a manner as to humble our vanity, and mortify our pride. If our own arm had brought us salvation, if our

faith and repentance had been the cause of our pardon and acceptance, then we might, justly, have gloried in our own strength ; and, being puffed up with pride, have again fallen into the condemnation of the devil. But when our salvation is, entirely, owing to the merits of another, every mouth is stopped, and they who glory, can glory only in the Lord. “ Where is boasting, then ? It is excluded.— “ By what law ? by the law of works ? Nay ; “ but by the law of faith.” Rom. iii. 27.

3. The doctrine of atonement has an excellent tendency to excite in us a love and esteem for our God and Saviour, and to strengthen our faith and confidence in them. The Father loved us so as to give his Son for us, and to accept of that payment from him which he might have demanded from us. After this, shall we not love him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength ? The Son loved us with so great a love as to give himself for us, to endure the punishment due to our sins, to die in our room that we might escape, and, by his death, not only to deliver us from misery and ruin, but, also, to procure for us the most glorious privileges, and a title to a most noble inheritance ; is it possible then to refuse him our

love and esteem? If love be naturally productive of love, if friendship merits a correspondence in kindness, what effect should the consideration of such unspeakable love, and such incomparable friendship have upon us? How precious should Jesus be in our esteem! If he is not, we are guilty of the blackest ingratitude. If we detract from the dignity of his person, and degrade the merit of his atonement, we do nothing less than crucify to ourselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. We will love God who first loved us. We will ascribe thanks to him for his unspeakable gift. We will join with the Apostle Paul, who, after having mentioned the great things which Christ had done for his people, and the great benefit which sprang from his atoning blood, breaks out into the following sublime language: “ Who shall separate
“ us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or
“ nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all
“ these things we are more than conquerors,
“ through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor prin-
“ cipalities, nor powers, nor things present,
“ nor things to come, nor height, nor depth,

“ nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans viii. 35, 37, 38, 39.

If the love of Christ be thus shed abroad in our hearts, we will not conceal it within our own bosom, but be careful to evidence our love and esteem, and to cause our light to shine before men. We will speak of him in the congregation, we will tell what great things the Lord hath done for our souls, we will do every thing, in our power, to promote his honour and interest in the world. If he did so much for us, we cannot deny to do a little for him. If he submitted to pain, infamy, death, and the curse for us, we cannot think it hard to endure afflictions, or even death itself for his sake, or for the good of his church. In short, whether it be by life or death, Christ will be magnified in us.

The great and acceptable way of evidencing our love and esteem for Christ, which is, unfortunately, too much neglected in practice, is by the obedience of his precepts, and the constant practice of good works. Thus says the Lord himself : “ If ye love me, keep my commandments ;” and, “ ye are my friends,

“ if ye do whatsoever I command you.” I shall soon have occasion to illustrate, particularly, many of those virtues which the atonement of Christ ought to lead us to cultivate ; and, therefore, I shall content myself, at present, with stating the general obligation which it lays us under to obedience.

Formerly, we were bound to obey him, because he was our Creatour, Preserver, and Governour ; but, we are, now, in consequence of redemption, made subject to him by stricter and more endearing ties. He is now both our Lord and our Redeemer. We are not our own, but bought with a price. Therefore, we ought not to think our own thoughts, or to do our own actions, but glorify God with our bodies and spirit which are his. The disciples of our Lord uniformly represent the love of Christ as productive of this effect : Hear the Apostle Paul, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. “ The love
“ of Christ constraineth us, because we thus
“ judge, that, if one died for all, then were all
“ dead, and that he died for all, that they
“ which live should not henceforth live unto
“ themselves, but unto him which died for
“ them and rose again.”

The doctrine of atonement tends, greatly, to strengthen our faith and confidence in Christ. It is not easy to conceive in what respect Christ could be the object of a rational and well grounded faith, if he were a Saviour only by example, and not by merit. For upon what plea could he, then, intercede for sinners ?— Upon what foundation could his power of salvation be placed ? If he had appealed to *mercy* only, *justice* would, immediately, have interposed, and have pleaded that it was inconsistent with the divine rectitude to injure one attribute of his nature, in order to magnify another. But, now, when he has satisfied the demands of justice, when he has appeased and reconciled the offended Deity, his intercession has weight and efficacy. He now pleads his own merit in behalf of his people ; he presents, by rightful authority, his complete atonement as the fulfilled condition of the covenant which was made between him and his Father ; and he claims, in consequence of it, the performance of the promises annexed to the fulfilment of the condition. In this point of view we need not be afraid to place our confidence in him. “ Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died, who also

“maketh intercession for us.” Let us, therefore, come boldly unto a throne of grace, seeing we have an High-priest, even Jesus, the Son of God, who hath passed into the heavens, and carried along with him a sacrifice of infinite value in the sight of God.

4. The doctrine of atonement is excellently calculated to deter us from wickedness, to fill us with a hatred of sin, and to excite us to the love and practice of holiness.

“Because judgment is not speedily executed against an evil work, the hearts of men are fully set in them to do evil.” When God keeps silence, and speaks not in loud and striking judgments, they imagine, that, he is altogether such as themselves, and will not remember their transgressions. But if such men would hearken to their consciences, or were capable of conviction, the sufferings of the Son of God for sin would show them, in the most striking light, the folly of their conduct.—They prove, that, some time or another, sin *must* be punished, and that, wherever guilt real or imputed goes before, there the wrath of God will follow. “Wheresoever the carcasses are, there will the eagles be gathered together.” If the beloved Son of God, who

did no sin, was exposed to sufferings so terrible, and to a conflict so severe, because he bore the sins of others ; have sinners and the impenitent, with whom God is angry every day, any reason to expect impunity ? If there was no peace for the Lord of life, will there be any peace for the wicked ? The delay of the punishment is no proof that it shall never happen. If the punishment due to the sins of the penitent came upon Christ four thousand years after it was predicted, that an atonement for sin would be made, shall the punishment of the impenitent never arrive ? Yes, be assured, ye workers of iniquity, short is the day of your prosperity. The night is fast approaching, and the storm of God's indignation, which is now gathering around you, will burst upon your head with boundless fury. And how terrible is the vengeance of the Almighty ! Who shall abide in the day of his wrath ? If the Son of God was so pressed down with the displeasure and desertion of his heavenly Father, if he uttered such groans, and prayed for the removal of the cup, what will be the consternation and torment of the damned, who will have no ray of comfort to cheer their souls, and no strength to support their

burden ? And, if Jesus Christ was in such a situation, though he had complete assurance of victory and success, what despair shall lay hold upon the sinner, when he has no hope of an end of pain, and when, after millions of ages shall have elapsed, his sufferings shall be no nearer to a conclusion ?

Thus it fully appears, that, the atonement of Christ adds weight to the fear of punishment, which is so strong a motive to deter us from iniquity. I added, that, it gains over our reason and affections by showing us the evil nature of sin, and, by filling us with a hatred and abhorrence of it. How heinous and how dreadful a thing must sin be, which could not be pardoned without the sufferings of an infinite Being ! What detestation of it should arise in our minds, when we reflect on the pain and sorrow which it occasioned to Jesus, our best friend, whose love to us was stronger than death ! Our sins were the causes of Christ's sufferings. " He was delivered for our offences." He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. If he had not borne our sins, the Jews could have had no power over him. After this, is it possible, that, we can indulge in iniquity

with pleasure? Ought not such reflections to embitter every sinful delight, and render every transgression abominable in our sight?

In like manner, how much ought we to condemn ourselves, and to be grieved for our folly and iniquity! “They shall look upon
“him whom they have pierced,” says the Prophet Zechariah, (Chap. xii. 10, 11,) “and
“they shall mourn for him as one mourneth
“for his only son, and shall be in bitterness as
“one that is in bitterness for a first born.”—When our Lord suffered, the inanimate creation seemed to sympathize with him. The sun was shrouded in darkness—all nature was convulsed—the solid rocks were torn asunder—the holy temple was rudely shook, and the dreadful scene was completed by the waking, even, of the dead. Shall we, then, be unmoved; we, who are the cause of Christ’s sufferings, and most nearly interested in the event of them. Shall we not, rather, awake from our fatal lethargy, and bid adieu to the pleasures of sin; pleasures vain and idle, and hateful to God?

I observed, lastly, under this head, that, the atonement of Christ has a great influence towards making us forsake our sins, and follow

holiness. This is represented, in almost every page of the New Testament, as the effect of Christ's death, and as one of the ends for which he died. Thus says St. Paul : Tit. ii. 14.—“ Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.” 2 Tim. ii. 19.—“ Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” Col. i. 21, 22.—“ You who were sometimes alienated and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblamable, and unreprouable in his sight.”

I know that the doctrine of atonement has been perverted, by some of its pretended friends, to purposes destructive of godliness ; and this has been objected to it, by its enemies, as, necessarily, arising from the doctrine itself. But who would not rather adopt the language of St. Paul ? “ Do we then make void the law through faith ? God forbid ; yea, we establish the law.” For never was the law so magnified, or made so honourable, as by that obedience which Christ gave to it as a part of his atonement : and though we are, now,

exempted from obedience as a condition of life, yet, as has been, already, shown, we are under stronger obligations to obey the law, as a rule of conduct, than we were ever under before. “ If we are crucified with Christ, “ then we are dead to sin : how, then, shall “ we, that are dead to sin, live any longer “ therein ?”

From what has been said, it appears how ill-founded those objections are which represent the system of the orthodox christian as unfriendly to the interests of morality. It represents man, indeed, in his present fallen and degenerate state, as unable to think a good thought or to do a good action. It does not, however, discourage him from the attempt, but, on the contrary, furnishes him with higher powers, derived from a nobler source, and calls upon every man to exercise the grace which is in him. It teaches us, that, our faith and repentance have not the smallest efficacy in procuring our salvation ; but, it never yet taught, that, the unbeliever and the impenitent would enter into the kingdom of heaven. It represents some as chosen to life, and others as given over to reprobation ; but it is ignorance of it's nature to suppose, that, it consid-

ers predestination as inconsistent with the most perfect freedom of actions, or, that it represents the foreknowledge of God as the cause of the future salvation or condemnation of men. It teaches us, that, we are not justified by works ; but, it does not teach, that, works are unnecessary to salvation ; on the contrary, it declares, that, without holiness no man can see God. It informs us, that, Jesus Christ obeyed the law in our name, and in our room ; but, at the same time, it lays us under the strictest obligations to obedience ; the obligations of duty to a Lord and Master ; of gratitude to a benefactor ; of love to a friend ; in short, of every principle which can operate upon a reasonable being. But I cannot, without doing injustice to so important a subject, omit showing, how, it is an inducement to the practice of some particular virtues.

The atonement of Christ ought to lead us to love one another. This is the natural effect of our love to Christ : if we love the master, we will also love his servants : if we love him who begot, we will also love those who are begotten. Besides this, if Jesus loved any so much as to die for them, will we counteract the intentions of his affection so far as to hate

or persecute them ? Will we despise, or, treat harshly, those saints who are dear in God's sight ? Thus does St. Paul reason : “ We that
 “ are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the
 “ weak ; for even Christ pleased not himself,
 “ but as it is written, the reproaches of them
 “ who reproached others fell upon me.” Can we hear our Lord say, “ this is my command-
 “ ment, that ye love one another, as I have
 “ loved you,” and, “ hereby shall all men
 “ know that ye are my disciples, if ye love
 “ one another,” and, yet, hate, defame, or injure our neighbour or our friend ! Can we read the exhortation of St. Paul, “ walk in
 “ love, as Christ also hath loved us, and given
 “ himself for us an offering and a sacrifice, for
 “ a sweet smelling savour,” and pay no attention to the advice ? Can we duly weigh the reasoning of St. John : “ Beloved, if God so
 “ loved us, then ought we also to love one
 “ another : hereby we perceive the love of
 “ God, because he laid down his life for us ;
 “ wherefore we ought to lay down our lives
 “ for the brethren ;” and yet be uncharitable to the needy, or withhold our hand from our brother in distress ?

The atonement of Christ is, likewise, a strong inducement to forgiveness of injuries. God, freely, forgave us our debts, Christ, cheerfully, paid our ransom : can we, then, rigorously demand entire satisfaction from others ?— We ought, rather, to be “ kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another in love, even as God, for Christ’s sake, hath forgiven us.” Jesus endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, and will we indulge anger, retain resentments, and revenge every unguarded expression, and every undesigned or imaginary wrong ? How can we expect mercy from God, when we show none to our fellow men ? With what plea can we approach the throne of grace to ask forgiveness for our unnumbered transgressions, when we are sensible, that, we have not forgiven our neighbour in far less aggravated circumstances ?

In like manner, if we make a proper use of the atonement of Christ’s blood, we will seek peace with all men, and keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. The ultimate end of Christ’s making atonement, at all, was to restore peace and harmony, to reconcile foes, to bring together things in heaven and things on earth. Part of the song which was sung

by the heavenly host, at our Saviour's introduction into the world, was, "Peace on earth and
"good will towards men." And, indeed, his death lays us under the strongest obligations to peace and unity. For, if Christ hath reconciled upon the cross all the redeemed unto God in one body, having destroyed the spirit of enmity by his sacrifice, then we are, no more, strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of faith. And how comely is it for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is as the dew of Hermon, as the dew that descended on the mountains of Zion.

My believing brethren ; you are all members of one family, you are all baptized into one faith, you are all justified by the same blood, you are all sanctified by the same spirit, you are all travelling to the same country, and, you will all meet in that blessed place where no discord enters. How foolish, then, must it be to fall into uncharitable strifes by the way ! especially, in such a state as the present, where you are beset with so many temptations, and have so many common enemies.

Again ; the atonement of Christ ought to lead us to humility and lowliness of mind.—Christ humbled himself for our salvation ; and should not we to follow his example ? Our greatest Benefactor lived in poverty and distress : our greatest blessings were procured by sufferings and death : ought not we, then, to live contented in every situation of life, ought not we to be unambitious of grandeur and power, ought not we to be inoffensive to all men, to be submissive to our superiours, to be condescending and obliging to our equals and inferiours ; in a word, to be the servants of our brethren ? Our Lord gave his disciples the very same advices, and enforced them by his own example. Matth. xx. 28.—“ Whosoever will be great among you let him be your minister : and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant, even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

As I do not propose a complete illustration of this part of the subject, I shall, only, observe, farther, that, the atonement of Christ is a strong inducement to us to mortify our evil desires and passions, and to withdraw our pur-

suits and affections from the things of this life. Jesus Christ did not pay so enormous a price as his own blood to redeem us and our faculties from sin and death, that we might employ them in any vicious or unworthy pursuit.—He did not purchase the Holy Spirit, and bestow him upon us, that we might employ our bodies, which are his temples, in the service of the flesh. Nay, the Apostle, to the Galatians, tells us that “they who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh, with it’s affections and lusts.” Neither ought we to set our hearts upon the things of this life. Thus says the Apostle Paul : “If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.”—If it were necessary that the Heir of all things should renounce the pleasures and conveniences of life in order to accomplish our salvation, the same self-denial is undoubtedly binding upon us. If this work was so difficult to him, may we indulge in ease and pleasure ? No : we are engaged in a race wherein we will, infallibly, come short of the prize, if we stop every moment and entangle ourselves with the affairs of this life. “Let us, therefore, lay aside every weight, and the sin which

“ doth so easily beset us, and let us run with
“ patience the race set before us, looking un-
“ to Jesus, the authour and finisher of our faith;
“ who, for the joy that was set before him,
“ endured the cross, despising the shame, and
“ is now set down at the right hand of the
“ throne of God.”

5. The doctrine of atonement is highly comfortable to every true christian. It assures him of the complete salvation of all those who were chosen before the foundation of the world. Christ hath paid his ransom, and he cannot be lost. He hath destroyed the hand-writing which was against him, by nailing it to his cross. It, also, assures him of the complete perseverance of the saints in a state of grace. If they fall away, either finally or totally, it must go to impeach, either, the perfection of Christ's atonement, or the sufficiency of God's grace to keep them from falling. But Christ hath made complete atonement, and hath purchased grace sufficient for them in every trying hour. How, then, shall believers be moved? The winds may beat, and the rains may descend, but they cannot be overthrown, for their foundation is on a rock.

In confirmation of this precious truth, we may add, that, Jesus hath not only purchased salvation, but, is also exalted, a Prince and a Saviour, in order to make a perfect application of it. Thus, says he himself, “I give un-
 “ to my sheep eternal life, and they shall nev-
 “ er perish, neither shall any be able to pluck
 “ them out of my hand.” It was promised to him, from eternity, that, when he should make his soul an offering for sin, he should see his seed, and the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. This promise must be fulfilled ; for, in him, all the promises are, yea and amen. But, how could it be fulfilled, if any of those who had been made partakers of the heavenly gift, should fall away ? What satisfaction could he have in seeing those, for whom he died, perish ? Could it answer, either, the will of the Father, “ that of all given him, he
 “ should lose none,” or, the intentions of his own love, in giving himself for us ? But, it must be, entirely, to his own, and to his Father’s satisfaction, for him to be able to say,
 “ here am I, and the children whom thou hast
 “ given me : those that thou gavest me, I
 “ have kept, and none of them are lost.”

How pregnant with comfort and consolation are such doctrines to the believer ! They fill him with assurance of grace, peace of mind, and joy in the Holy Ghost. When conscience harrows up the soul, when the law presents its terrors, when the accuser of the brethren suggests his fears, he may refer them to Christ, and point out his atonement. He will answer all accusations, he will satisfy all demands.—He is their sun and shield, he will give grace and he will give glory, he will withhold no good thing from those who walk uprightly.—They may adopt the language of St. Paul : “ We know that all things shall work together “ for good to them who love God, to them “ who are the called according to his purpose.” For, as he argues, “ he that spared “ not his own Son, but delivered him up for “ us all, how shall he not, with him, also freely give us all things ?” If he gave us so great a gift, he will not, surely, refuse to give us the trifling comforts of this life, if they are for our advantage. In whatever situation of life, then, we are placed, we may be sure, that, we are not beyond the reach of our Father’s love. The rays of his goodness can pierce the darkest cloud of adversity. If we are in

poverty and want, we may rest satisfied, that, such a state tends more to promote our general good, and the perfection of our character, than a state of the greatest ease and affluence. If we suffer under affliction, we ought to consider it as the chastening of a parent, and not the punishment of a judge. Punishment it cannot be : our substitute hath borne all the punishment, and exhausted all the wrath. In short, under every calamity, we ought to comfort ourselves with this consideration, that, it is not so great as we deserve, or as the Son of God endured on our account.

What happiness, then, have they who are partakers of Christ's sufferings ! What evils are they freed from ! What good things are they put in possession of ! They are delivered from sin, Satan, death and hell : they enjoy peace with God, the glorious liberty of his children, and a title to all the blessings of the new covenant. These are glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. These make them rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. On the other hand, how dreadful is the situation of those who have no interest in Christ's atonement. They shall not see life, for the wrath of God abideth upon them.—

Loaded with the guilt of their sins, God is their adversary, and he will cast them into that prison whose dreadful gates shall not be unbarred till they have paid the utmost farthing. To aggravate their misery, the whole blame lies upon themselves, for they have rejected the mercy which was offered to them, and thereby treasured up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath. “For,” says the Apostle, to the Hebrews, “if we sin wilfully “after that we have received the knowledge “of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking “for of judgment and fiery indignation which “shall devour the adversary.” And how fearful a thing is it to fall into the hands of the living God ! Let us, therefore, kiss the Son lest he be angry, and we perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little : blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

To conclude, since the doctrine of atonement has so excellent a tendency, and answers so many important purposes, let us cheerfully embrace it, let us zealously defend it against the attacks of its enemies, let us earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. There never was more need for exer-

tion than in the present age, when infidelity is mistaken for liberality of sentiment, when the uncertain dictates of corrupted reason are preferred and even set up in opposition to the infallible standard of truth, and when men of learning and genius are making attempts to hunt this doctrine from the world. But we have reason to rejoice that those who are for us are stronger than those who are against us. This is the doctrine in which St. Paul gloried; this is the mystery into which Angels desire to look; this is the subject of that new song which employs the inhabitants of heaven above. — Let us adopt the language of the heavenly assembly: “Thou art worthy to take the book
 “and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast
 “slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy
 “blood, out of every kindred, and tongue,
 “and people, and nation: Blessing, and honour,
 “and glory, and power, be unto him
 “that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the
 “Lamb for ever and ever. AMEN!”

SERMON VII.

*The present impunity of the wicked reconciled
with the perfect government of God.*

ECCLES. CHAP. 8, VER. 11.

“ Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily : therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.”

SO great is the perverseness of the human mind, that it turns the strongest instances of God's wisdom and goodness into arguments against his very existence and providence ; the means appointed for our improvement, we employ for our ruin ; the very medicines of the soul we convert into deadly poisons. Nothing, for example, can be a clearer proof, than God's delaying for a time the punishment of sinners, that he is slow to anger and of great kindness, that he is unwilling that any should perish, but that all should return, repent and live : And yet, the text informs us,

and experience confirms the truth of the information, that, even, from this, the most dangerous inferences have been drawn. These are of two kinds, and take their rise from two different classes of men, the scepticks or disputers of this world, who are disposed to doubt and cavil ; and the *wicked or profane* who lay hold of every thing which seems to countenance them in their favourite pursuit. The former raise objections to the divine government, and consider the impunity, and, not unfrequently, the success which attends bad men, as contrary to that sense of merit and demerit which God has given us for the direction of our conduct, and as inconsistent with the administration of a wise, just, and perfect being. The latter have abused the goodness of God, have become bolder in iniquity, and have continued in sin though grace did abound.

Let us, therefore, try to justify the ways of God—to show the impropriety of those objections which are made to the plan of providence, from the delay which takes place in the punishment of vice—and to explain the folly and danger of those men whose hearts, because sentence against an evil work is not

executed, speedily, are fully set in them to do evil. This is the object of my discourse : and certainly I will have accomplished the purpose of addressing you from this place, if I am able to rectify your mistaken opinions about the divine government—to increase your reverence and love for the divine character—and reclaim the sinner from those paths which lead down to death.

The subject divides itself into two heads.

I. I shall show that God's sparing the wicked for a time is consistent with justice, wisdom, and goodness.

II. I shall show that the conduct of wicked men is highly absurd and unjustifiable, in taking encouragement to continue in sin, from this part of the divine providence.

I. I return to the first head, and shall begin with considering how far the justice of God is affected by this objection, or is consistent with this fact in his government.

1. It may be observed, then, that if things are stated in a proper light, and as they really are, objections against this attribute can have no place. God's government is of two kinds, *natural* and *moral*. In the former there is the

same connection between actions and their consequences, as between the cause and its effect ; so that the time, the manner, and nature of the consequence are precisely determined by the action, and as necessarily result from it, as the effect results from the cause. In God's moral government, on the other hand, though reward and punishment are, likewise, connected with the actions of moral beings, yet it is only in the way of *desert* : and the action is the occasion, but not the cause of that pleasure or pain with which we expect certain actions to be accompanied. Does any thing happen contrary to this in the divine administration ? What is the real state of the case ? The wicked man is often great in power ; he abounds in riches, and is successful in all his undertakings. But in this there is nothing inconsistent. These are the natural consequences of foresight, application and industry ; and they do not hinder the sinner from feeling also the natural consequences of his guilt, which are shame, remorse, fear, and self-condemnation. On the other hand, the good man, who keeps all God's commandments blameless, languishes in poverty, and groans under oppression. But this is not re-

pugnant to the justice of God's government. For riches, and honour, and power are not the necessary fruits of virtue ; they are peace of mind, and the testimony of a good conscience. In short, vice is immediately followed by its natural punishment, and virtue by its natural reward. God's natural government, then, is perfectly complete ; and as far as it is concerned, we have no reason to complain.

Indeed, the greatest part of our complaints is founded on our own inconsistent ideas. Why should we envy the wicked man the pleasures of this life when he has sacrificed ease, and liberty, and conscience, to obtain them ? They are certainly purchased at a dear rate. Why do we repine at his success, when he takes the natural and direct road which leads to it : when he rises early, and sits up late : when this world engrosses all his thoughts and care ? On the other hand, we form unreasonable expectations in behalf of the good. There is a modesty natural to virtue which prevents a man from exerting his faculties to their full extent. The good man, whose prospects lie beyond the grave, puts little value on the things of this world, and undergoes little trouble to acquire them.

The contempt in which he holds those honours and that grandeur at which other men so eagerly grasp, effectually damps his ardour in the pursuit of them. He possesses, in short, a nice sensibility of conscience and a scrupulous adherence to integrity which will not allow him to mingle in the bustle and intrigue of life : to conform himself to the maxims and opinions of the world, or go with the multitude to do evil. No wonder, then, that he is poor, neglected, and unsuccessful. God's natural government would be incomplete, were it otherwise!

But still religion teaches us, that, bad men ought not to be happy, nor good men miserable ; that, vice deserves farther punishment, and virtue a further reward, than they have a natural tendency to produce ; and we think, that, if God's moral government were equitable, the wicked should not escape, nor the expectation of the just be cut off. But, in the first place, do you suppose, that, wicked men, however great or opulent, are really happy? No, my friends. The main pillar of one's happiness must be placed in his own breast, and if all is not right within, the vain show in which many men walk, the noise and splen-

dour which surround them, will only create new sources of uneasiness. The face may wear the smile of joy, but underneath lurk care, anxiety and discontent. Observe the conduct of those who live in the opulence and luxury of life, and whose merits, you think, do not entitle them to such elevation? Does it indicate the possession of happiness greater than what other men enjoy? They fly to business, to company, to amusement, in order to get rid of their own thoughts, and in quest of happiness to which, at home and in private, they seem to be strangers. Nay, frequently, after having been jaded in the ways of vice, tossed in the whirl of pleasure, and lost in dissipation of thought, life at length becomes insipid, its enjoyments tasteless, and existence itself a burden. This is the state of too many of the rich and great, in whatever way their riches and power have been obtained. But if they have been acquired by fraud, by rapine and by oppression, then they are unacquainted with that pure and exquisite pleasure which springs from a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man. Then there is a gall which embitters every feast, there is a poison which is mingled in every cup. Then

Conscience, who was not heard amidst the storm of passion, lifts up her voice, and speaks in terroure to the guilty soul. And wretched indeed must be the situation of that man who has no internal resource nor comfort; who is exposed to the stings and reproaches of his own mind: whose steps are ever haunted by the dæmon of remorse; whom guilt appals with awful anticipations of future punishment. What are poverty, and pain, and sickness to this? A man may sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit, who can bear?

In the second place, though the justice of God be, undoubtedly, pledged for the punishment of the wicked, we can have no proof that it is pledged to inflict this punishment immediately upon the commission of the crime. In God's moral government, we have already observed, there is no connection between the crime and the punishment, but that of desert; and a thing's being deserved only proves, that, it shall certainly happen some time or other, without determining either the time or the manner of its happening. How then shall we pretend to say that it is *unjust* in God to delay the punishment of sinners even for a single moment? We ought not to limit

the God of nature, or suppose that *He* whose dominions extend throughout all space, and whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, is obliged to make this world the scene of punishment, or that he is confined to the present life for its execution.

The punishment, then, even of the most notorious offenders, who in the judgment of all men are ripe for vengeance, *may* without injustice be delayed. But I go farther, and maintain that it *must* be delayed to a certain degree, without its being productive of the greatest injustice and disorder, without destroying the whole constitution of human affairs.

If God's moral government were to counteract his natural, if the execution of the general laws of the universe were prevented or suspended in order to punish or reward individuals, there could be no certainty in human affairs; vice, disorder, and confusion would take place of that harmonious and uniform plan of things which now prevails. Men would not know how to act under so uncertain and changeable a government, because they could have no security that their actions would be attended with their due reward. Who would sow their fields, or plant their vineyards, if

they knew not whether they should reap the fruits thereof? Without doubt, wicked men are not entitled to happiness: but if they do not receive the natural reward of their labour and diligence what dreadful consequences would ensue? If the hand of the diligent did not make rich, if the exertion of our abilities did not ensure success, the very existence of this world would be at an end. Where would be that *industry* and *action* by which, as by a moving power, the whole machine of nature is carried forward? Where would be the encouragement to cultivate and improve our faculties when idleness and dissipation would be equally advantageous with activity and labour? In short, the links which bind together society would be dissolved, and the world would soon go to ruin, disorder, and decay.

2. I proceed to observe, that, “not to execute judgment speedily against an evil work” is consistent with the greatest wisdom. Though it be allowed, that, we cannot accuse God of injustice for delaying the punishment of sinners, provided it shall certainly happen some time or other, yet it may still be thought, upon a slight view, that his wisdom is not free from imputation, and that he has not wisely adapted

the means to the end. Holiness being the end of the divine administration, would not this have been more effectually answered; would not sin have been more discouraged, if it did not enjoy even a temporary triumph?

But let us reflect on the constitution of man; let us consider, that, he is a free agent, and that the present life is a state of trial and probation for a future; we will then, immediately, see that that state of things which is the source of difficulties to many, and a cause of complaint to some, is absolutely necessary in such a constitution.

There can be no virtue or vice in actions which are not free; and no action can be free which is produced by the strength of any passion or motive without regard to the determination of the will. Some situations of the mind are such that the will's self-determining power cannot be exerted, and some passions are so violent that, irresistibly and by a blind impulse, they hurry the man on to action. For the actions which proceed from such causes a man can deserve neither praise nor blame: he is answerable only for the passion, or the state of the mind, which gives rise to them. The influence of moral motives may like-

wise be so strong as, infallibly, to direct the will, and leave no room for its self-determination. In this case, they operate exactly as animal principles, and however right the line of conduct may be to which they lead, the man himself has no merit in it, because his will was determined by a force irresistible and external to itself. Let us illustrate this by an instance. To preserve our lives and faculties in a condition fit for the service of that being to whom we owe them is a duty incumbent on us : and we would have great merit in doing so if our actions were free, and proceeded from the dictates of reason and conscience. But as this was a matter too pressing and important to be left to the slow deliberations of reason, we are provided with an instinct which leads us to self-defence and preservation. In such actions, then, there can be no merit, because they proceed from a mere animal principle which is guided by blind necessity, and acts whenever it is moved by its proper object, just as the fire consumes the fuel which is heaped upon it. Now if punishment were to follow in this life immediately upon the commission of sin, or even if we could pierce within the veil, and see the just in their bles-

sed abodes, serving God day and night in his temple not made with hands ; if the gates of hell were unbarred to our view, and we beheld the wicked in their place of torment, no man could possibly continue a moment longer in iniquity : the motives to virtue would entirely overpower the will, and destroy the freedom of action. But why should we be thus made free agents, and at the same time be placed in a state where we would be to all intents and purposes impelled by necessity ? why give us a power of choosing without leaving any room for its exertion ? For in a constitution of things like this, the love of virtue would be nothing but a desire of self-preservation, and hatred of vice nothing but a dislike of pain and suffering. In this case the very ideas of conscience and duty could have no existence, because there could be no motive to action but present advantage or disadvantage. We could derive no benefit from being endowed with reason and understanding, from being able to discern between good and evil, to look into the future, to foresee the consequences of events and actions, to compare joys, which are unseen and at a distance, with present pleasures, which are near at hand, and strong-

ly solicit our acceptance: all this part of our constitution would be useless, if we were compelled to be virtuous by a principle similar to that by which we are led to eat, drink, sleep and defend ourselves from danger.—That we are *free* and *reasonable* beings we know from fact: and our being free and reasonable is inconsistent with present rewards and punishments: for one part of such a constitution would amount to a destruction of the other.

But still you maintain that present rewards and punishments would answer the end proposed: that their consequences would be extremely happy, very discouraging to vice and favourable to virtue. You think that if every impure action was punished as instantly as the crime of Zimri, who met his fate in the very tents of the daughters of Midian, there would be less of that lewdness and debauchery which in the Apostle Paul's time was done in private, but which in our days is done in publick. You believe, that, if the thunder did instantly come forth to blast those impious persons who open their mouths against the heavens, and blaspheme the majesty of the Most High, the language of men would soon approach that standard of perfection

pointed out in the gospel which requires our conversation to be *yea, yea*, and *nay, nay*. If fire should descend from heaven and consume those prophane worshippers who offer impure incense upon God's altar, then perhaps fewer would draw near to him with their lips and worship him with their mouths while their hearts were estranged from him, and that all would worship in spirit and in truth.

It might be so. There might be less impurity, hypocrisy, and profane swearing ; there might be more conformity to the law ; there might be more obedience, if you please, but not a grain of more virtue. If we act as mere *machines*, our actions can deserve no praise. That virtue which is the effect of force and constraint, is no virtue at all. Can God, think you, approve or reward an obedience which springs not from love to him, but from love to ourselves ? Can that conduct (whatever it may be) be called virtuous which is the fruit, not of reason and conscience, but of mere animal impulse ? Be ye judges yourselves ; would you not prefer one act of kindness done you *freely*, out of choice and affection, to the obedience of many slaves, whose sole motive of conduct is the fear of

punishment. God acts by this same rule. It is not the thing done, but the manner in which it is done ; it is not obedience but the motives to it which are of any account with him. All his *creation* obey him. The inanimate part thereof, invariably, observes those motions and tendencies which his finger hath impressed. The sun, the moon, and the stars, unerringly perform their revolutions in silent submission to the orders of their Maker. The inferiour and animal creation, by blind instinct, fulfil the laws which their Creator hath appointed them. The stork and the swallow know their seasons. But even all this harmony, however beautiful and pleasing, is not half so acceptable in his sight as the pure incense of the free-will offering of rational man.

We may add, that, though it were possible for us in this supposed situation to possess virtues, yet they would of necessity be of a base and degenerate kind. They would be mixed with worldly mindedness, pride, ambition, and a love of pleasure. Though God, then, has in great kindness made our duty to be likewise our interest ; though he has determined that, finally, it shall be well with

the righteous, and ill with the wicked, yet he has wisely deferred rewards and punishments to a future and a distant period, and besides, has drawn a veil over them, lest even *there* they should prevent the use of those other guides of conduct which he has given us—reason and conscience.

Let us consider farther, that we are here in a state of trial and probation, in which our faith and obedience are put to the test, that our character may be ascertained, and that we may be happy or miserable in a future life, accordingly as we have done good or evil in this : that the present is an imperfect state, wherein we must submit to discipline, that we may make improvement in holiness and advance towards perfection. Now such a state as this implies, necessarily, that there shall be some trial, that we shall have some temptations to struggle with, some difficulties to surmount : but if vice were instantly followed by misery, and virtue by happiness, it would require no self-denial to abstain from being vicious ; to be virtuous no exertion of mind would be necessary. We could have no temptation to grow faint or weary in well do-

ing, if we were to reap as soon as we had sown.

Let me observe, by the way, that it is equally as absurd to expect present rewards and punishments, as to wish that seed time and harvest should come together. We would certainly laugh at, or pity, rather than reason with that man who should sit down to complain and lament that he was obliged to wait till the time of harvest, for the reward of his labour ; or repine, that, till that time came, the slothful was in a better situation than himself.—There would be little danger of our going astray, if the path which led to life was broad and easy, and the way of destruction was narrow and rugged. But this would be no state of probation ; we would have no trial of our faith to abide ; no evidence could be had of the sincerity of our love and obedience ; in short, our real character could never be ascertained, if every thing was on the side of religion, and nothing to be gained by vice but immediate destruction. In such a case, the most impious would learn to dissemble. The most profane would set a guard on the door of their lips. Those who could never think of suffering persecution for the sake of right-

eousness, would cheerfully embrace it, if it led the way to honour and preferment. Many who took delight in vice, while it was attended with no danger, would shudder at the thoughts of it, if the sword of death was suspended over their heads, ready to avenge the commission of every crime.

Not only would such a constitution render it impossible to discover the real character, but the fact is that no character would be formed at all. A sally of passion, an unguarded folly, or one deviation from the paths of peace, is not sufficient to rank us with those who shall be excluded from the kingdom of God. Neither, on the other hand, can a few serious moments, one fit of devotion, one good action constitute us good men. A single act cannot determine the character : it is formed only by reiterated acts grown into habits. If every one who had ever transgressed the law of God, were ripe for vengeance, dreadful would be the state of the whole human race. But before habits are formed, before vice is persisted in, in short, till the character be, fully, determined to be wicked, no punishment can properly be inflicted. In like manner, our virtues must ripen into habits, we must be

constant and persevering in holiness. Our path must be like that of the light which continually increaseth, before we can deserve any reward.

The conclusion from the whole is this, that God hath, in the greatest wisdom, for a time, apparently, withdrawn from the scene, allowed things to go on in their natural course, left men entirely to themselves, given full scope to every principle in their nature to operate and full time for their characters to be unfolded and determined, before he pours out his wrath upon the guilty, or receives the faithful into the joy of their Lord.

3. However conclusive the foregoing remarks are to prove the *justice* and *wisdom* of God, in the point under consideration: we may go farther, and show that it is an instance of the greatest *goodness*, and is highly beneficial to men.—For another reason why God spares the wicked is *in hopes* of their reformation; that they may have time and opportunity to repent, and return unto him. So exceedingly great is the love of our heavenly Father that his bowels yearn with compassion towards the most worthless of his children. To prevent even their *final* destruction, he

hath devised and executed a scheme by which the returning penitent may be forgiven and again received into favour. Not only so; but he is anxious for our recovery. Every method is employed; every motive which can have weight with a rational being is addressed to us to reclaim us from our iniquities. God invites and commands; encourages and threatens us. All day long his hand is stretched out, and his voice is, to the sons of men, “how long, ye simple ones, will ye love vanity?” In a word, there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety nine just persons that need no repentance. In this light is the Father of all exhibited to us in the sacred writings. But how shall this be reconciled with that instant display of wrath which immediate punishment infers? How shall God’s gracious purposes be fulfilled, if the sinner be cut off in the midst of his course, and hurried before the tribunal of his judge, without a moment granted him to think on his former ways, to see his guilt and folly, and before it be too late to flee for refuge to the hope set before him. Indeed, the immediate punishment of vice is inconsistent with the very existence of

the human race, and the whole plan of reconciliation by Jesus. If the punishment threatened to Adam had been inflicted, immediately, upon the commission of the crime, none of his posterity could ever have existed ; if we were instantly to receive the reward of our actions, we would all, this day, have been in that place whence his mercy is utterly gone, where he will be favourable no more : if the first offence excluded us for ever and without hope from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power, in vain would Jesus Christ have died to bring us unto God. While then there is hope of amendment, it must be highly merciful and perfectly equitable in God to spare the guilty. And who can say when men have sinned unto death and when not ? While we are on this side of the grave, we are all prisoners of hope ; and before death draws the curtain which separates us from the invisible world, before our state is unalterably fixed, no hour can be so late, that, if we draw near unto God with sincere repentance, we shall be cast out. Not only, then, must we be able to determine on the characters of men, but we must be, also, able to foresee whether they will continue in sin, or repent and forsake it ; which I am sure we cannot without the presence of God.

That the reformation of sinners is the intention of the divine administration in the delaying of their punishment, is evident from experience. Many have been plucked as brands from the burning ; and from being the slaves of vice, have become the ornaments of religion and the supporters of its cause.— Many who, in the morning of life, have been obscured by clouds and darkness, have, as the day advanced, shone forth as the lights of the world, and, in the evening, set with uncommon lustre. The Apostle of the Gentiles was once the chief of sinners. He who was not behind the first of the Apostles, who was admitted into the third heavens, and saw things which could not be spoken or heard, was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor.

If you ask, then, why God so long tolerates the violation of his laws, the reason is plain. The judge of the earth is *God* and not *man*, and therefore the children of men are not consumed. In this, as in too many other things, we consider our own conduct as a rule for that of the Almighty. We are guided by resentment and passion, and pour forth our vengeance on the first offence ; but God is

the Lord God, merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin ; he is slow to anger, and of great kindness. Our narrow views extend no farther than present appearances ; but before the omniscient God, the darkness is as the light ; the inmost recesses of the heart are laid open ; and that veil which hides the future from mortal eyes, entirely disappears.

4. Even supposing sinners perfectly incorrigible, and that there is no reason in their own case why their punishment should be delayed, yet justice and mercy require that they should be spared for the sake of others ; that the good may not be involved in their ruin. This reason is assigned by our Lord in that beautiful parable of the tares and the wheat, which is delivered in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew. When the servants came and asked their master if he willed that they should go and gather up the tares ? He said unto them, *nay*, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up the wheat also ; let both grow together until the harvest. Now, the harvest is the end of the world : the good seed is the children of the kingdom : the tares are the children of the wicked one. In this

world, they are allowed to grow up together ; lest, if the bad are cut off, the good should be rooted up along with them. For if the present life be the scene of punishment, how shall the righteous be safe in the day of wrath ?— If the wicked are deprived of a publick blessing, or afflicted by a common calamity, the righteous must have an equal share of suffering. If the sun shine and the rain descend at all, they must shine and descend on the just and on the unjust. If the pestilence be let loose, it will enter the borders of the good as soon as those of the bad. Undistinguishing are the ravages of war. Famine knoweth no difference between the vile and the worthy. In this world, men of all characters are indiscriminately mingled together, and when God sends forth the ministers of his wrath, there is no mark set upon the good which shall be a token to the destroying Angel to pass over. “ But that be far from God to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked ; and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from God : shall not the judge of all the earth do right ? ” Accordingly, we find Jehovah himself declaring, that, he would not punish the

inhabitants of Sodom, though the measure of their iniquities was already filled, if he found only ten men who had not gone with the multitude to do evil.

But has not God many secret ways of cutting off the wicked, without having recourse to publick calamities? Undoubtedly he has. But how shall we distinguish between those events which happen in the ordinary course of Providence, and those which proceed as an immediate judgment from God? Perhaps the wicked more frequently feel the effects of God's wrath than we are at first disposed to believe. He has certainly various ways of acting, not agreeable to the established laws of his administration, which yet do not appear miraculous or in direct opposition to them. In every government, the laws, however perfect, do not extend to every case, but much is, with propriety, left to the wisdom and discretion of the governour. And how would the ardour of our devotion be checked, with what propriety could we pray to God to avert calamity and to bestow blessings, if he was guided by invariable laws from which he could in no instance depart? It is on this account that *sacred* is so much to be prefer-

red to *profane* history. In the latter, events are related, and causes assigned, such as they appeared to human intelligence. The former admits us behind the scene ; shows us the springs by which every thing is moved ; points out the hand which sets the great machine in operation, and discovers to our view the Supreme Being descending from his throne and engaging in the affairs of his creatures, guarding the righteous as the apple of his eye, but angry with the wicked every day. If we attend to these remarks, we cannot but acknowledge that though one event seems to happen unto all, the case may in reality be very different in the divine administration. As the fool dieth, so dieth the wise man : in the *land without order* no distinctions are to be found : which are taken away by the righteous judgment of God, and which by the diseases and common accidents of life, we see not far enough to be able to determine. But, there is a circumstance mentioned in one of the discourses of our Lord, which ought to check our rashness and presumption on this subject. There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day ; and there was a certain

beggar who was laid at his gate. It came to pass that the poor man died : the rich man also died and was buried. Thus far there was no difference : to human eyes both had shared the same fate, both were involved in the same calamity. But let us look beyond the grave, and a striking difference appears. The poor man was carried by Angels into Abraham's bosom ; and the rich man in hell lifted up his eyes in torment.

From this I infer, that if we were more attentive than we commonly are, to the course of Providence, we would find the finger of God more visible than we at present think it to be. On the right hand, and on the left, he doeth his work, though we do not perceive him.

We may observe farther, that, the interests of men are so blended together, and so intimately connected ; the happiness and misery of one depends so much upon the happiness and misery of another : in short, society is bound by so close a chain, that if one link be broken, the whole is loosened and dissolved. For this reason, though the wicked were punished in the most private manner possible, the good must necessarily be fellow sufferers.

Every man, however mean or vicious, has friends and connections and dependents who are deeply interested in his welfare, who look up to him for assistance and support, and who would severely feel his loss, if his crimes should call forth the vengeance of heaven. You are vexed, you say, to see the proud rich man living in open neglect and contempt of religion, addicted to pleasure, debauchery, and intemperance ; indulging himself in the practice of every vice that is offensive to God and disgraceful to the human character. You wonder that God is so slow to wrath. But, are you sure that this offender is really as bad as you pretend he is. Is it not true, that, we are very apt, through envy and jealousy, to form too unfavourable an opinion of the characters of the great ? Believe me there is more virtue, more attention to the rules of morality and justice, (and this alone is pure and undefiled religion) to be met with among the rich than is commonly imagined. But, farther, have you considered how many poor people are daily fed by the crumbs which fall from the rich man's table ? how many families are supported by that labour and employment which ministers to his pleasures and diversions ? Do

you know all those friends and connections who depend upon his interest for employment and promotion? Or have you thought of what shall become of his family and children, whose sole reliance is on him for subsistence, education, and introduction into life? Among all this number, there are surely some who ought not to share in his sufferings. The man himself may deserve no mercy. In his own case, there may not be one reason why his punishment should be delayed for a single moment. But would you throw an hundred industrious people out of employment, and leave them as a burden on the publick? Would you cut off the hopes of many diligent and well-educated young men, who expected, by his means, to have been brought forward into notice, and to have served their country in an useful station? Would you reduce a family of innocent and helpless children to beggary, and turn them into the street without a friend or a protector? This, I am afraid, you will find it more difficult to reconcile with the *mercy* of God, than to account for the present impunity of vice in perfect consistency with *justice*.

Upon the whole, who has any reason to

complain that judgment is not speedily executed against an evil work? It cannot be the *wicked*, for they are the immediate gainers: nor ought it to be the *good*, because it is for their sakes that the evil are spared. And certainly none would wish to have the scene reversed; to see God's justice as conspicuous as his mercy now is; in place of patience, forbearance, and long-suffering, to behold nothing but wrath and judgment and fiery indignation.

II. Thus far, Christians, I have endeavoured to explain the reasons why divine providence does not speedily execute sentence against an evil work. Thus far I have endeavoured to vindicate the character of God from the objections brought against it from this part of his government. A very few short inferences from what has been said will serve to illustrate the second head of discourse, which is to show, that, the conduct of wicked men is highly absurd and unjustifiable in taking encouragement to continue in sin from this part of the divine economy.

Every thing which has been said conspires to prove, that God does not defer the punishment of sin because he approves of it. On

the contrary, this very temporary impunity is a proof of his justice and wisdom. And surely the just and natural inference is, not that we may go on boldly in iniquity because the Governour of the world seems regardless of his laws, and punishes not their transgression; but knowing as we do his holiness and justice, we ought to infer that there will be a reckoning in future, and that the more terrible, the longer it is delayed. If the wicked received the due reward of their deeds, as soon as they committed any crimes, they might then suppose that all was over, and that they might safely continue in transgression, undisturbed by the fears of futurity. But when the stroke is suspended, while their fate is uncertain, anxiety and fear should take place of presumption, and security give way to repentance and reformation. Had men like brutes been devoid of sense and reason, it would have been necessary to operate upon their minds by present rewards and punishments. And, in that case, they would perhaps have been excusable for continuing to transgress the law, if their actions were not followed by their immediate reward or punishment: But since they are reasonable beings, and know that the justice of

God requires the punishment of vice, must they not infer, that, if the sinner be happy here, he will be miserable hereafter? And since they are endowed with foresight, and are capable of being actuated by distant motives, ought they not to forsake sin from the fear of future wrath, though the practice of it were attended with no present disadvantage? To do otherwise is the conduct of madmen, who have neither reason, conscience, nor foresight. To persist in iniquity because sentence is not speedily executed, is like men who refuse to take shelter from the coming storm till it has burst upon them in all its fury; like men who refuse the assistance of a friendly hand to rescue them from the waves, till they are actually buried in the deep. To reason with such men were useless, to attempt to convince them were desperate; I will only remind them of this awful warning of God himself. “These things hast thou done, and I kept silence: thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.”

Your conduct is still more unjustifiable, your presumption is still more evident when you know that you are spared not for your own sakes, but for the sake of others. You are vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, and your doom is delayed that the vessels of mercy may be gathered in and saved from that vengeance which shall be revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. While you grow together with the wheat, you may escape, but a time cometh when God shall gather the wheat into his garner, and burn up the tares with unquenchable fire. Be not deceived, ye are not the favourites of heaven. As children of the Almighty, ye are the objects of his compassion ; as enemies of heaven, and transgressors of his laws, ye are the objects of his abhorrence. The lenity and indulgence now exercised towards you are not on your own account, but on account of your relations, friends, and connections, who would be involved in your ruin. Those pious men whom you despise, and whose manner of life you dislike, are your patrons and protectors, who now for a little shelter you from that dreadful

storm which shall consume all the workers of iniquity.

Last of all, consider the intention of God in delaying the punishment of sinners, and your conduct must appear both foolish and ungrateful. The reason of this delay, we have already seen, is that we may repent and return. If you had contracted to finish an important work before a certain period, under a severe penalty in case of non-preformance ; if the penalty were forfeited, but through lenity and indulgence the term was still prolonged, you could not possibly justify yourself for idleness, or engaging in any other business while the great work remained unfinished. Now you have the great work of your salvation to work out ; the penalty is no less than eternal misery in the infernal abodes ; this penalty you have forfeited, but through the mercy of God, the term of your probation is still continued. Will you still be so foolish as to neglect the opportunity you enjoy ? Will you defeat the purposes of heaven ? Will you be insensible to the goodness of God ? Will you abuse and insult the mercy of heaven ? Will you continue in sin that grace may abound ? A delay of repentance may admit a shadow of

apology. A determined resolution to persist in iniquity can be the offspring only of a dis-tempered brain. God forbid that either of these should be the situation of any in this assembly. AMEN!

SERMON VIII.

On the Resurrection of the Body.

JOB, CHAP. 19, VER. 26.

“ Though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.”

MAN dieth, and where is he? He descendeth into the narrow house, and we behold him no more. The immaterial part which is indivisible and indestructible, being separated from the body, passes into regions unknown, where it is no longer the subject of observation; where its destiny, its state, and its operations are concealed from our view. The other component part of man, the body, we can trace a little farther. We see it deposited in the earth, it there decays, in a few years it mingles with the common mass of matter, from which ere long it cannot be distinguished. With this account of the matter, the great multitude of men are satisfied, they re-

turn, without any further inquiry, to their ordinary professions ; their companions are forgotten, and they heedlessly pass on till the same fate approaches themselves.

But the busy spirit of curiosity would pursue a little farther the destiny of our race, and is unwilling to resign it to oblivion, or non-existence. On this subject, happily, we are not left without principles on which to proceed. A careful consideration of the nature and principles of the human soul, of the character of the Supreme Being, and of the events of life, afford indisputable evidence, that, the spiritual part of man, after its separation from the material, continues to exist the subject of a moral government, in another state of being. Thus far reason goes, what she teaches, revelation confirms, elucidates, renders more explicit, and adds moreover, many things unknown before. With regard to the body, reason adds nothing to the testimony of the senses, but leaves it in a state of perpetual union with its kindred dust. Revelation leads forward our views ; it teaches us that, though a man die, he shall live again ; that, after the sleep of a long night, he shall awake in the morning of the resurrection ; that, after a certain period

of disorganization and separate existence, the body shall be re-organized, and re-united to the soul by which it was formerly animated.

But reason, though incapable of giving any information, and incompetent to form a judgment on this subject, yet, with an effrontery unaccountable, scruples not to propose its objections. The resurrection of the body is miraculous and impossible. The generations of men go down in succession to the dust, but none ever return. Since the Fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. “How are the “dead raised, and with what body shall they “come?” How shall all those particles which are, perhaps, scattered through the four quarters of the globe, or that have entered into the composition of two or more different bodies, be collected again, and restored each to its proper owner, so as to preserve personal identity? To all who impertinently propose these and similar difficulties we reply with our Lord, that, they err not attending to the *course of nature*, not considering the *power of God*, not knowing the scriptures of truth.

1. The cavillers against the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, do not attend to the

course of nature. For though the course of nature does not actually present us with the phenomenon of the clods of the valley rising to life and motion, yet every year and every day, exhibits numberless changes similar to that which will be produced by the resurrection of the body. I do not here allude to that fabulous bird from whose ashes a new creature of the same species is said to be produced, or to the curious, but well authenticated, fact of the various kinds of serpents who, annually, deposit their external covering and appear in the spring in a new but exactly similar form. —I chiefly allude to what happens in the vegetable creation, where the analogy is most perfect and beautiful. The tree, or shrub, which in winter is stript of its leaves, and is to all appearance dead, in spring indicates the symptoms of returning life, and again puts forth its leaves and blossoms. Even though cut down, the root will sprout again, and arise to new life under the same form. In the beautiful and poetical language of Job, “There
“ is hope of a tree if it be cut down, that it
“ will sprout again, and that the tender branch
“ thereof will not cease. Though the root
“ thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock

“ thereof die in the ground : yet through the
“ scent of water it will bud, and bring forth
“ boughs like a plant.” The seed which is
deposited in the earth, first dies, corrupts and
decays ; but after a short period of dissolution,
we see it again revived in a new form, and
producing grain of a nature and appearance
altogether similar to itself. In like manner,
the human body is sown in the earth as a grain
of seed for the future harvest : and, when the
period of revivification arrives, it sprouts forth
and produces a new body of the same nature
and properties. Such is the forcible reasoning
of St. Paul on this subject. “ That which thou
“ sowest is not quickened, unless it die. And
“ that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that
“ body that shall be, but bare grain, (it may
“ chance of wheat, or of some other grain)
“ but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased
“ him, and to every seed his own body. So
“ also is the resurrection of the dead.” For
if God so clothe the grass of the field, how
much more shall he clothe our mortal bodies
with a glorious robe of immortality.

But we need not wait so long as the revolution of a whole year to behold the revival of nature ; the death and resurrection of man is

plainly shadowed forth in the course of every twenty-four hours. “ In the evening, the
 “ day, with its labours, dies into darkness and
 “ the shadow of death. All colours fade, all
 “ beauty vanishes. All labour and motion
 “ cease, and every creature, veiled in darkness,
 “ mourns in solemn silence the interment of
 “ the world. Who would not say, *it is dead,*
 “ *it shall not rise.* Yet, wait only a few hours,
 “ in faith and patience, and this dead and en-
 “ tombed earth, by the agency of heaven
 “ upon it, shall burst asunder the bars of that
 “ sepulchral darkness, in which it was im-
 “ prisoned, and arise, and be enlightened, and
 “ its light shall come. The day-spring from
 “ on high shall revisit it, and destroy the cover-
 “ ing cast on all people, and array universal
 “ nature with a robe of glory and beauty,
 “ raising those that sleep, to behold themselves
 “ and the world changed from darkness to
 “ light, and calling them up to give glory to
 “ God, and think of the glorious morning of
 “ the resurrection.”*

The resurrection of the body, then, is not absurd and contradictory, for it is perfectly

* Bishop Horne.

analogous to what happens in every day's experience. And happy are they to whom day unto day thus uttereth speech, and night unto night teacheth knowledge, who employ the changes and revolutions of nature as arguments in support of religion, or as motives to think of heavenly and divine things.

2. The objectors to the doctrine of a resurrection of the body, consider not the power of God. Notwithstanding the idle fable of one who formed a man of clay, and stole fire from heaven to animate him, we feel no reluctance to confess that to frame an organized body out of a mass of earth, and to communicate to it life and motion, is wholly beyond the human powers to perform. But though we cannot raise the dead, or even conceive how this can be done, it by no means follows, that, this is a work impossible to him whose power and wisdom are infinite, who, at first, spoke all things into existence out of nothing—who made man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life so that he became a living soul, who successively calls into being and preserves in life the various generations of the animal and vegetable worlds—who turneth man to destruction, and

saith, return, ye children of men—and who with the breath of his lips can annihilate the universe. With God nothing is impossible. All seeming difficulties vanish before him. In whatever quarter of the world the ashes of the dead are deposited, he can find them out. Though they be scattered to the four winds of heaven, or entombed in the caverns of the earth, or swallowed up by the roaring ocean, these are all the repositories of the Deity, and shall yield up their charge to him whose commands universal nature obeys; at whose voice the sea shall give up its dead, and they that are in their graves shall come forth. Such a consideration silences every objection arising from human unbelief or weakness. It diffuses light over that metaphysical darkness and obscurity in which the philosophy of this world would involve the subject. Let the vain reasoner lose himself in endless mazes, disputing about personal identity, and solving the difficult problem, how that same body which is laid in the grave and which in the process of time may be converted to a thousand different purposes, or may enter into the composition of many other bodies that are likewise to be raised, can be reanimated at the last day: we

are satisfied with that simple idea of personal sameness which we acquire from common sense—and we find no more difficulty in believing that the same bodies which are laid in the grave shall be raised, than, in thinking that he who to day is tried for a murder is the same identical person who committed it ten years ago, though probably, owing to the attrition and waste to which all living bodies are subject, there may not remain one particle of the substance of which his body was then composed. Above all we rest assured, that, he who has declared that he will raise the dead, is well able to perform what he hath promised. He hath said it and he will bring it to pass.

3. The opposers of the resurrection do not consult the scriptures of truth. There we find not only, that, God *can* raise the dead, but that he has *actually done* it. For how many of those who had even seen corruption, do we read of being restored to life, and enabled again to enter into the business and transactions of the world. Nor was it individuals only who were distinguished in this manner. Upon the occasion of our Saviour's passion, a great multitude are said to

have undergone that change which shall happen to all at the last day. The graves opened and many of those who had slept for ages, arose and entered into the city, and were seen of many. But the most remarkable event of this nature recorded in sacred writ is the resurrection of our Saviour, which is an argument for the truth of a general resurrection, not only as being an instance in point, a proof of the possibility of the thing, but also, as a pledge and security that all those who are united to him shall be raised again. The union between Christ and his people is such as not to admit a separation of interests or of persons. Where he is, there they shall be also. He is the first fruit, the earnest and pledge of the future harvest. He is the head, they are the members. And who ever heard of a living head and dead members? He is the root, they are the branches. And if the root have life in itself, the branches will in due time participate thereof, and expand and flourish through its virtue.*

* Hence the Apostle reasons in this forcible and unanswerable manner.—*Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen. And if Christ be not risen,*

The direct evidence of a resurrection to be found in the scriptures is such as is sufficient to set the question at rest. Though neither the immortality of the soul, nor the resurrection of the body are, expressly, taught in the Jewish system, they appear to have been well known to many good men among that people. The language of Job is clear and decided. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, "and that he shall stand at the latter day upon "the earth. And though after my skin, worms "destroy my body, yet in my flesh shall I see "God. Whom I shall see for myself, and mine "eyes shall behold, and not another, though "my reins be consumed within me." The beautiful and striking vision of Ezekiel con-

then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God, that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is Christ not raised. And if Christ be not raised your faith is vain. Ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ, are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all died, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order. Christ the first fruit, afterward, they that are Christ's at his coming.

to the very scene of the resurrection. We hear the noise, and behold the shaking, and the bones coming together bone to his bone, and the sinews and the flesh coming upon them, and the skin covering them above—and lo ! the breath breathing upon them from the four winds, and they stand up on their feet, an exceeding great army. Nor was the belief of the resurrection confined to the prophets and righteous men. The whole Jewish people, (except the Sadducees, or free-thinkers of that age), lived in the same hope, as may evidently be inferred from Martha's saying to our Lord that " she knew her brother should " rise again at the resurrection of the last day." It is in the New Testament, however, that fountain of light and truth, that this doctrine is expressed with the greatest certainty. Thus saith he who is the resurrection and the life, " the hour is coming, in which all that are in " the graves shall hear his voice and shall come " forth, they that have done good, unto " the resurrection of life ; and they that have " done evil unto the resurrection of damna- " tion." The Apostles, uniformly, taught the same doctrine, and preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead. St. John's vi-

sion of the last and general resurrection is awfully sublime. "I saw," says he, "a great
"white throne, and him that sat on it, from
"whose face the earth and the heaven fled
"away, and there was found no place for
"them. And I saw the dead, small and great,
"stand before God : and the books were
"opened—and another book was opened,
"which is the book of life, and the dead were
"judged out of those things which were
"written in the books, and according to their
"works. And the sea gave up the dead
"which were in it : and death and hell (in
"other words the grave), delivered up the
"dead which were in them : and they were
"judged every man according to their
"works."

What is thus clearly revealed in these and many other passages of scripture, enlightened reason hesitates not to approve. The propriety of such an arrangement must, upon reflection, be apparent to every man. The law of God is not calculated for a part, but for the whole of man—consisting of those two intimate relations and constant companions, *soul* and *body*. It is violated or obeyed by both in conjunction. And as they shared in the mer-

it and demerit, it is proper, that, they should share in the punishment or reward. The soul designs, the body executes. The senses are the inlet of every idea, and are, consequently, the sources of every temptation. Carnal appetites, affections and desires, deprave the soul, corrupt the mind, and mislead us from the path of duty. The heart is the fountain of evil and profane thought, the tongue is the organ by which they are expressed. Thus the members are instruments of iniquity, and therefore in the eye of justice subjects of punishment. But, on the other hand, those members which have been instruments of righteousness, which have been subjected to many sufferings and self-denials in the cause of God, and which have assisted and seconded the soul in the execution of it's virtuous resolutions, and in it's acts of devotion, should not be left unrewarded. " God is not unrighteous to forget
" the body's work and labour of love. From
" those eyes which have poured forth tears of
" repentance shall all tears be wiped, and they
" shall be blessed with the vision of the Al-
" mighty. Those hands which have been
" lifted up in prayer, and stretched out to the
" poor, shall hold the palm of victory, and harp

“ of joy. Those feet which have wearied them-
“ selves in going about to do good, shall stand
“ in the court of the Lord, and walk in the gar-
“ den of God, and in the streets of the New Je-
“ rusalem. That flesh which has been chasti-
“ sed and mortified, shall be rewarded for what
“ it has suffered. Nay, the very hairs of our
“ head are all numbered, how much more the
“ parts of our bodies. This is my Father’s
“ will, said our Lord, that of all which he has
“ given me, I should lose nothing, but raise
“ it up at the last day.”*

Many questions have been proposed concerning the nature and properties of that body which we shall possess after we have risen from the grave—questions which tend more to the gratification of curiosity and to amusement, than to edification and real improvement. Here the scriptures have left us in the dark—it doth not yet appear what we shall be, and let us not attempt to be wise beyond what is written. One thing we know with certainty, that, a great change shall be produced ; and that, though consciousness and personal sameness shall remain, yet, we shall,

* Bishop Horne.

in many respects, be different from what we now are. Thus says the Apostle in his Epistle to the Phillippians, “ we look for the Saviour, “ the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven, who “ shall change our vile body, that it may be “ fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able “ to subdue all things unto himself.” The fashion of Christ’s glorious body was once displayed before the eyes of the three favoured disciples on Mount Tabor. It then lasted but for a short time, but it was exceeding glorious ; his face shone like the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And St. John gives us a description of his person still more particular and glorious. “ His garment is white “ as snow, and the hairs of his head like the “ pure wool : his eyes as a flame of fire, and “ his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and his countenance as the “ sun shineth in his strength.” All earthly images are indeed incapable of conveying a just idea of the objects of heaven. “ For the “ glory of the celestial is one, and the glory “ of the terrestrial is another.” But to be like unto Jesus must imply something very great and excellent, something very different from

our present houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, whose strength must be perpetually renewed by sleep and refreshment, whose motions are sluggish and inactive, which are every moment subject to sickness and pain, decay, death and corruption. But, I cannot state the contrast in more striking language than it has already been done by St. Paul.—

“ It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption—it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory—it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power—it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.” I shall only add, that, the same change shall take place in those who are alive at Christ’s second coming, as well as in those who have been dead and buried. For, as the same great Apostle says, “ we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.”

“ Wherefore, my beloved brethren, seeing these our bodies are to become instruments of glory hereafter, how ought they to be instruments of grace here? for grace is the dawn of glory, as glory is the meridian of grace. Seeing we are to have such bodies, what ought our souls to be, for whom such

“ bodies are prepared ? And how ought we to
“ spend our short moments of probation in
“ cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the
“ flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the
“ fear of God.”* In a word, since death is
swallowed up of victory, since they who sleep
in the dust shall awake, let us ascribe thanks
to God who giveth us the victory through our
Lord Jesus Christ.

* Bishop Horne.

SERMON IX.

On the tendency of afflictions to form the christian character.

HEB. CHAP. 12, VER. 11.

“ Now, no chastening, for the present, seemeth to be joyous, but grievous ; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”

IT perplexed the sages of antiquity to reconcile many parts of the plan of providence, with the justice and goodness of the Governour of the world ; and it has often disquieted the minds of good men to behold the exaltation of the wicked, and the depression of the righteous. The wiser among the heathens had, in general, recourse to the supposition of a future state, wherein men would be rewarded or punished according to their actions and characters ; and christians have trusted, with humble resignation, in the wisdom of that Being

who makes light to arise out of darkness, and order out of confusion. Indeed, though clouds and darkness frequently surround the Supreme Being, yet justice and judgment are always the habitation of his throne. Though his ways are often beyond the reach of mortal eyes, yet his plan, when completed, shall be found consistent with the most perfect goodness and rectitude. For, though pain and evil cannot be emanations from the divine attributes, they may still be essential parts of the divine administration, considered as means to an end, and as tending to promote the perfection of the christian character.

The question, then, is whether afflictions have such an influence? The Apostle says they have : “ they yield the peaceable “ fruit of righteousness to those who are exercised thereby.” To illustrate this proposition, is the object of this discourse. It will, therefore, be necessary

I. To explain the *effects* which, by the assistance of the Spirit, afflictions are calculated to produce upon the heart and character of christians.

II. To state those *conclusions* which obviously arise from the subject.

The present is evidently a state of probation, wherein man is bred up amidst trials and hardships, and thereby fitted for a more perfect state in another scene of existence. The progress of sanctification is gradual ; and it is only after long discipline and much correction that the child of God becomes complete in holiness. If, at regeneration, the corruption of the sinner were totally removed ; if the seeds of grace, when once implanted in the soul, did instantly grow up to maturity, then, it might be difficult to perceive, either, the necessity or utility of afflictions. But in this mixed state of things, when even in the best of men, there is a law in the members which wars against the law of the mind, afflictions become highly necessary to aid the exertions of the latter, and to promote the christian's growth in grace. For scripture, experience, and the reason of the thing must convince us that they are excellent ministers to bring men unto Christ.

It must be observed, however, and the observation refers to the whole of this discourse, that, afflictions can produce no good effect, where they do not meet with grace in the heart. Unless God's spirit co-operate with

his providence, means, otherwise the most proper, will be without avail. Unless the Spirit descend as showers upon the mown grass, the fiery trial will consume the christian. Pain and evil, murmuring, hardness of heart, and despair seem to be the immediate and natural consequences of afflictions. They are salutary only by remote consequence, and as a means appointed by the heavenly Father for the reformation of his children. This idea is evidently suggested in the text, by the phrase “them that are exercised thereby.”—For unless men are properly exercised under afflictions, and the influences of the spirit accompany them, they will never yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness. But, accompanied with this divine influence, they are the best means of improvement in holiness, which must be the ultimate object of the government of God.

1. Afflictions bring those who are exercised by them to serious reflection, and consequently to self communion, and a correction of their faults. Mankind are at all times averse from an examination of their own heart and conduct. Busily employed in the search for knowledge, wealth, honour and pleasure,

every thing around them attracts their notice, but they will by no means turn their attention to themselves, or inquire into what passes within their own breast. This natural disposition of mankind exerts itself with full force when the candle of the Lord shines bright upon them. Levity, thoughtlessness and inattention are the almost necessary consequences of an uninterrupted course of prosperity. In full possession of health and spirits, flushed with success, and elevated with farther hopes, men seldom bestow a serious thought upon their present state or their future destination. They pass on, amused with the noise and splendour that attend them, without once thinking whence they came, or whither they are going.

But when God chastens them with adversity, and removes the amusing and vain show which is such an enemy to thought, then reflection must take place. The sanguine hopes and flattering ideas, which prosperity cherished, disappear when the evil day comes.— A thousand gay insects flutter in the summer's sun, which the blasts of winter sweep from the face of the earth. And when the storm howls around, and every thing external presents a

dreary picture, we must of necessity have recourse to reflection, and must fall into that thoughtful state of mind which is most favourable to improvement in knowledge and religion.

When our attention is thus roused, and our mind is brought to serious reflection, our heart and conduct are the first objects of our inquiry. Conscience is awakened and brings in review before us our former ways. We naturally ask, what sin we have committed, of which we have not repented ; what vicious habit we have persisted in during the repose of conscience ; what secret indulgence we have taken, at which reason, deluded by prosperity, winked, but for which God now chastizes us. This was the case with Joseph's brethren. In their prosperous days, their ill treatment of their brother did not once recur to their mind. But when famine and distress came upon them ; when they were obliged to leave their country in quest of the necessities of life ; and when they were confined and threatened with death in a foreign land, then did better reflections arise ; "and they
" said one to another, we are verily guilty
" concerning our brother, in that we saw the

“anguish of his soul, when he besought us,
“and we would not hear; therefore is this
“distress come upon us.”

Afflictions, by thus awakening our attention, and quickening a sense of sin and a sorrow for it, yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness. Sloth and inactivity are peculiarly hurtful to a christian. While the man in the parable slept, the enemy came, and sowed tares among his wheat. Whatever, therefore, excites men to watchfulness and care must be highly useful to prevent the success of temptation, and the progress of sin, as well as to encourage the growth of the divine seed which is sown in the heart. An uninterrupted flow of ease and tranquillity lulls the mind into a fatal indolence and insensibility about religious concerns. Some judgment or mark of God's displeasure is, then, necessary to purge our dross, to rouse us to a serious sense of religion, and to make us discern and value the things that belong to our peace, ere they be for ever hid from our eyes : just as when the atmosphere is full of noxious and pestilential vapours, some violent storm or thunder is necessary to disperse them, to clear the infected

air, and to restore the sickly sky to its former health and benignity.

It deserves to be remarked here, that, though men are led to an amendment of their ways by that connection, which exists in the divine administration, between sin and suffering, yet with respect to good men, afflictions cannot be considered as the punishment of that sin on account of which they are inflicted. Punishment is the execution of the divine law, but has not in view the reformation of the offender. The sorrow, and pain, and misfortune which befall the wicked, whose eyes are closed, and whose ears are dull of hearing, can be nothing but punishment. They are the foretastes of that bitter cup which is in the hand of the Lord, and the dregs whereof shall be wrung out and drunk by the wicked of the earth. The afflictions of the righteous, on the other hand, are but for the hour of this life ; they are but as preparatory to the full enjoyment of the blessings of immortality. They are wholesome checks to keep the children of God in mind of their dependence, and of their engagement in the warfare of Christ. They are the bitter medicines which the divine Phy-

sician of souls employs for the recovery of those in whom there is no soundness.

The authour of the 119th psalm expresses, in a few words, the ideas contained in this particular. “It is good for me that I have
“been afflicted. Before I was afflicted, I
“went astray ; but now have I kept thy
“word. I thought on my ways, and turned
“my feet unto thy testimonies. I made
“haste, and delayed not to keep thy com-
“mandments.”

2. Afflictions work the peaceable fruit of righteousness, by detaching our thoughts and affections from the things of this life, and fixing them upon the more rational and certain enjoyments to be looked for in an immortal state. Nothing can be a greater enemy to the growth of religion than the profits and pleasures of this world. Our Lord compares them to briars and thorns which sprang up and choked the good seed that was sown among them. Nor is it surprising that they should have this effect. While we are careful and troubled about many things, we are very apt to forget the one thing needful. What is seen, and is near, makes a lively and deep impression on the mind, and is, for the most part,

preferred to what is unseen, though eternal.—Accordingly, there is no advice which is given more frequently, or with greater earnestness, by our Lord and his disciples, than that which the Apostle Paul has couched in these words : “ Set your affections on things above, and not “ on things on the earth.” To obey this direction must, at all times, be laborious to creatures so nearly allied to earth as we are, and who have so many desires that are for ever beset by the alluring objects of gratification that lie within the sphere of this mortal life. But it is a work of peculiar difficulty in the season of prosperity. We cannot but be attached to a scene in which every thing smiles upon us : we cannot but take delight in a situation where all is harmony and loveliness.

To counteract this influence, a general conviction of the vanity of life, and of the necessity of more rational pursuits, may have some weight with thinking men. But a reverse of circumstances, and the sufferings under calamity, are motives addressed to all men, the foolish as well as the wise. They are easily understood ; they come home to one’s self ; they go directly to the heart. If, for example, our situation in life has, in the course of provi-

dence, been changed from plenty to want, need we any other argument to convince us that riches often take wings and fly away, that if we place our happiness upon any external good, we shall be, perpetually, meeting with uneasiness and disappointment, and, that, the only thing about which a wise and good man should give himself any concern, is the peace of his own conscience, the approbation of his Judge, and an interest in the happiness of a future life? When sickness and pain succeed health and ease, what can more readily direct our thoughts to that period when our vision of this world shall be closed, and to that state of being into which we shall enter when the moment of dissolution shall be passed? If discord has deprived us of the objects of our esteem, or if they have descended into the tomb, how should these things urge us to place our love and affections upon God who is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother, and whose years are without end.

The man who has been thus chastened, and who by the spirit of God has been enabled to derive such profit from the afflictions of life, is not far from the kingdom of heaven. No object is left to engross his mind, or prevent

the growth of religion in his soul. He has laid aside every weight, and is thereby fitted for his christian race. He is not immersed in the business of the world, nor troubled with its cares ; for all his prospects lie beyond the grave. Nay, even in this life, he has an infinite advantage over those who have been always cherished in the fond lap of fortune.—To such men afflictions have a formidable aspect. The smallest disappointment or pain ruffles their spirits, and discomposes their minds. But the chastened christian can behold distress approach him without being discomposed. To him it is no new thing, it is a guest whom he has long entertained, and with whom he has become familiar. Even death, with all his terrors, cannot dismay him. He rather rejoices at his approach ; for he will free him from his cares, and ease him of the load of his afflictions. Indeed, what should make death terrible ? He will loose the christian from a world in which he has had little satisfaction, and to which he was but little attached. The malignity of sin, and the wickedness of men, convinced him that he was here in a hostile and a foreign land ; and he has long been looking for a better country. He

knew he was a sentinel upon a post which he durst not desert, but he has often desired to depart and to be with Christ.

3. Afflictions convince us of our own weakness and insufficiency, and of the necessity of trusting in God, and of depending on the assistance of his holy Spirit. It is evident, that, in the day of prosperity, we are apt to forget God, and put confidence in an arm of flesh. The reason given by Agur, in the Book of Proverbs, for not asking riches, was "lest I be full, and deny thee, and say who is the Lord?" This disposition of mind, however, is very inconsistent with the present condition of human nature. Few and evil are the days of man. He comes into existence helpless and forlorn. He seems to have imbibed with his earliest breath a deadly poison which causes him to languish here below, and makes his whole life one long and painful struggle. Buffeted by adversity, exposed to pain and sickness, and chastened by the hand of God, after having toiled out the long day of human life amidst hardships and evils, and but seldom blessed with the cheering rays of prosperity, he sinks forgotten in the silent grave. The experience of most men shows this to be the

lot that is most common to humanity, and when we compare its difficulties with the little strength which man possesses in his present weak and degenerate state, we cannot help exclaiming, “who is sufficient for these things?” No man has resources in himself against all the vicissitudes and trials and calamities of life.— Without that faith in God which gives strength to the weak, and that supernatural aid which is superiour to all opposition, he will feel himself to be but man, and will sink under the load. In God, therefore, must he put this trust ; under the shadow of his wings must he take refuge, until all his calamities be past.— “ When I am in heaviness,” says David, “ I “ will think upon God.” “ When my flesh “ and heart do faint and fail, God is the “ strength of my heart and my portion for “ ever.” “ Come and let us return unto the “ Lord,” says Hosea, “ for he hath torn and “ he will heal us ; he hath smitten and he “ will bind us up.” “ Let them that suffer “ according to the will of God,” says St. Peter, “ commit the keeping of their souls unto “ him in well-doing as unto a faithful Creator.” This is the very spirit of religion, and the source of all its comforts. With this support,

we are perfectly secure. The wind may blow, the storm may beat, the rain may descend, but we cannot fall, for our foundation is on a rock.

4. Afflictions call forth many graces which, otherwise, would never have been exercised. When the sinner first passes from death unto life, the seeds of every grace are sown in the heart : but many of them do not spring up, from want of culture, or lie dormant, from want of an opportunity of exertion. God, in the course of his providence, brings them forth by various means. Of these, afflictions are the most common and the most effectual. To them we are indebted for many of the most useful and ornamental virtues in the christian life : humility, resignation, and compassion, or what the Apostle ranks among the fruits of the Spirit, and calls meekness, patience, and tender-heartedness.

Humility is a soil in which all the christian graces flourish exceedingly. The precept enjoining it is, perhaps, peculiar to the gospel. Before Jesus, both Jews and Heathens had a haughtiness and pride of character very inconsistent with this transitory state of weakness and dependence. Our divine Master,

who was meek and lowly in heart, required his followers to learn of him this virtue.— Their situation was favourable to it's cultivation. They had many difficulties and hardships and evils to struggle with. But pride, arrogance, and self-sufficiency are the natural consequences of greatness and success. Innumerable are the temptations with which we are then surrounded. Who can bear, with constant moderation, the smiles of fortune, the favour of the great, the flattery of the mean and interested, or even the respect of the worthy? But when the scene is changed: when those creatures of a summer's day who courted us for selfish purposes are removed: when we are stripped of those splendid but adventitious ornaments that dazzled our sight; and when we see ourselves as we really are, weak and helpless, what can we then do, but humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and implore him, that in due time we may be exalted. When our spirits are weighed down with afflictions, and our heart is melted as wax within us, it is almost unnecessary to exhort us not to be high-minded, and to flee for refuge to him who is mighty to save.

Patience and resignation are unknown but in adversity. It is easy for that man to live in serenity who enjoys every thing that he can wish, who is sumptuously fed and clothed and attended. If we would meet with a holy patience, we must turn to another quarter, to him whose dwelling is the squalid hut of poverty, whose couch is nightly bedewed with tears, and who daily eats the bread of sorrow. He hath need of patience. He hath full scope for exercising that virtue which is the pride of man and the glory of God. Believing in resignation to the will of his Creator, the child of affliction becomes the child of obedience, and the remembrance of his sufferings on this earth shall be lost in the draught of those waters, whose flowing is as everlasting as the glories of God, and the happiness of the redeemed of the Lamb.

Charity and compassion are, likewise, nearly allied to adversity. Prosperity gives us the power, but seldom the inclination to do good. We must feel distress before we learn to succour the distressed. Little do the rich and the gay, who are hurried down the stream of pleasure, reflect how many thousands, at the very moment when they are indulging in lux-

ury and extravagance, are wearing out life in poverty, sickness, and all the variety of wo. "They that lie upon beds of ivory," says the prophet Amos, "and stretch themselves upon their couches ; that eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall ; that chant to the sound of the viol ; that drink wine out of bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments, are little grieved for the afflictions of Joseph." The influence of adversity upon the characters of men to excite compassion, may be inferred from the example of Jesus who submitted to the miseries and pains of humanity, that he might have a fellow-feeling with our infirmities. Being made like unto his brethren in all things, and having suffered, being tempted, he is now able and willing to succour those who are tempted.

5. Afflictions are an excellent trial of faith, both with respect to individuals, and to societies of men. In every society there are many who profess to adhere to it's laws, and yet are by no means sincere in their profession. The society of christians is not free from such characters. "Doth Job serve God for nought?" was the reply of Satan to God,

when he pointed out Job as a perfect and upright man ; and it is plain, that, many who in prosperity appear zealous for God, go back and walk no more with him when the day of trial cometh. It is easy to be religious when every man may sit under his own vine without any to make him afraid ; but, let persecution, for the sake of righteousness arise, and they only are the true servants of God, who rejoice that they are counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ.

In individuals, likewise, the tares grow up with the wheat. We imagine ourselves to have many virtues which disappear in the day of trial. The imperfection of the present state makes discipline and improvement necessary, and the very idea of discipline implies danger and difficulty. There can be little merit where no temptation is resisted, nor any difficulty overcome. The rich man's honesty is put to no trial. He has no motive to be impatient who is in full possession of health and tranquillity. Then, only, do we show the sincerity of our faith, when we are exposed to loss and persecution in maintaining our integrity. In prosperity we frequently impose on ourselves ; adversity undeceives us, and shows

the progress which we have actually made in the divine life. The weeds are removed, and the good seed takes deeper root. And if we abide this trial of our faith, which is more precious than that of gold which perisheth, we shall receive praise, and honour and glory at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

II. I proposed, in the second part of this discourse, to set before you some of those conclusions which obviously arise from the subject, and,

1. The preceding observations vindicate the moral character of the Governour of the world from all objections arising from the existence of natural evil. “ God is holy in all his ways, “ and righteous in all his works. He with- “ draweth not his eyes from the righteous.— “ If they be bound in fetters, and be holden in “ cords of affliction ; then sheweth he them “ their work and their transgression that they “ have exceeded. He openeth their ear to “ discipline, and commandeth that they return “ from iniquity. If they obey and serve him, “ they shall spend their days in prosperity, “ and their years in pleasure. But if they “ obey not, they shall perish by the sword, “ and they shall die without knowledge.”

2. One event happeneth unto all, but for very different purposes, and with very different effects. To bad men, afflictions come clothed in all their terrours, and as indications of God's anger and hatred. Good men consider them as the correction of one who loves them, and who is anxious for their welfare. Afflictions produce remorse and anguish in the wicked; to christians only they are useful. They come forth as gold purified in the fire.

3. We infer from this, and the whole of the discourse, that, good men have the strongest motives to bear afflictions with patience and resignation. It is God who chastens: "and shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his Maker?" Jesus, our Master, suffered afflictions; and we his servants can have no right to complain. Though in the world we have tribulation, he overcame the world, and when he departed from it, he left the promise of the Holy Spirit. But the chief motive to bear afflictions, patiently, which arises from this discourse, is the profit with which they are attended.—
"Happy is the man whom God correcteth;
" therefore despise not thou the chastening
" of the Almighty, nor faint when thou art

“ rebuked. of him.” “ Lift up the hands
“ which hang down, and the feeble knees.”
No chastening is, for the present, joyous but
grievous. You must feel pain that you may de-
rive any benefit. But the seasonable and salutary
influence of affliction will save you much la-
bour and many a pang. With what difficul-
ty would you have overcome an inveterate ha-
bit of indulgence, if adversity had not brought
you to timely reflection? What pain must you
have felt at death, if the disappointments and
evils of life had not disengaged your affections
from the present scene? To adversity you are
indebted for the exercise of those virtues
which are most ornamental to the christian
character, and most proper for the present
state of weakness and dependence. Be not
grieved, therefore, as those who have no hope.
These light afflictions, which are but for a
moment, will work for you a far more exceed-
ing and eternal weight of glory. The sun
that was suddenly overcast, will soon shine
forth with double brightness. The fields will
again look cheerful, and the face of nature
will again rejoice. AMEN !

SERMON X.

On the merits and sufficiency of Christ, as an expiatory sacrifice for the sins of man.

JOHN, CHAP. 1, VER. 29.

“ Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

THIS was the second publick testimony given of our Saviour, after his entrance on his ministry. The first came from heaven itself, when this voice was heard from the excellent glory, “ This is my beloved Son, in whom I “ am well pleased.” The second issued from the lips of his forerunner, John the Baptist, who bare witness of him, and, when he saw him among the people coming towards him, pointed him out to the by-standers, in these emphatick and characteristick words, “ Be-
“ hold the Lamb of God, which taketh away
“ the sin of the world.”

How happy were those ears which heard this joyful sound ! how blessed those eyes which beheld the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth ! with what eagerness, wonder and rapture must they have contemplated this extraordinary personage ! This was a sight which many prophets and righteous men desired to see but could not. We too are, in some respects, deprived of this privilege. But, though the Lamb of God no longer tabernacles on earth, or is visible to mortal eyes, still we may, with the eye of faith, pierce within the veil and see him seated at the right hand of God. Nay, he has left, even on earth, pledges and memorials which serve to recall his memory, and, by objects addressed to the senses, to render him present to the imagination. We cannot now listen to those heavenly instructions which issued from his lips ; but we may still peruse them in that sacred book, wherein, though absent, he still speaketh. His bodily presence we can no longer enjoy ; but wherever two or three are assembled in his name, there is he graciously and spiritually in the midst of them, to bless them. His glorious face is beheld only by angels and the spirits of the just made

perfect ; but his broken body and shed blood are represented to us by the most striking and significative emblems. Come to this holy table, and you will “ behold the Lamb of God, “ which taketh away the sin of the world.”— Here you will behold the whole mysteries of his appearance. Here you will see him, sent of God, meek, innocent and inoffensive, led as a lamb to the slaughter, and offered in sacrifice to his Father, that he might expiate the guilt of sin ; that he might purchase those gifts and graces which are requisite to the sanctification of sinners ; and, that, by exhibiting a noble example of virtue, and confirming the truth of all his doctrines, he might take away transgression and make an end of sin.

The phraseology of the text will appear elegant and expressive, if we consider the persons to whom it was addressed, and the time when it was uttered. John was now speaking to a company of priests and levites, whose daily business it was to offer up lambs, in sacrifice to God, for the expiation of the sins of Israel. It likewise appears from the context, that, the conversation happened about the time of offering up the evening sacrifice. In allusion, then, to the lambs offered under the

law, and more especially to the paschal lamb sacrificed on the great feast of the pass-over, our Lord's forerunner styles him the Lamb of God. But this title, which was, at first, figurative and metaphorical, has become the peculiar and appropriate designation of Jesus Christ. Even in his exalted state, amid the glories of his Father's throne, he disdains not that appellation which, in his state of humiliation, he acquired ; but still delights to be praised and magnified, not merely as God, but as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. In this character, the celestial Spirits fall down before him, and worship him, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, "and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast "slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy "blood, out of every kindred and tongue and "people and nation." It cannot, therefore, be unsuitable in us, who are now assembled, to commemorate that sacrifice which Jesus Christ offered upon the cross, briefly, to contemplate him as the Lamb of God, to inquire for what reasons he is thus denominated, and to show in what sense, and by what means, he taketh away the sin of the world.

I. Why is Jesus Christ styled, in scripture, the Lamb of God.

1. He is called a *Lamb* on account of the purity and innocence of his character. Nothing in nature exhibits so beautiful a picture of gaiety, innocence and inoffensiveness as a lamb, which is sportive, harmless and without guile. So, Jesus, the Lamb of God, was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. No wicked or improper design ever entered into his pure and spotless breast. No word ever issued from his lips, which was not calculated to promote the benefit of those who heard it, to instruct the ignorant, to reclaim the vicious, and to comfort the afflicted. No action of his life ever injured any, but many a time did he seek the temporal and spiritual interest of all, of his enemies and persecutors, of the unthankful and undeserving.— Under the law, it was required that the lamb or other animal offered up in sacrifice should be perfect in its kind ; to offer any thing that was lame, maimed or defective, was expressly forbidden as an insult to the majesty of heaven, and an abomination in the sight of God. The best and fattest of the flock were selected for

the service of the altar. So, Jesus was chosen a strong one from the flock. His sacrifice could not fail of being acceptable to God, because the purity of his nature and innocence of his life gave it a sweet smelling savour in his sight. Being perfect and holy, he was well qualified to become the authour of eternal salvation to his people : for he needed not to offer sacrifice, first for his own, and then for the sins of others. We are not redeemed with corruptible things, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot.

2. Jesus Christ is styled a Lamb, on account of the meekness and patience with which he submitted to death. It is unnecessary to describe the manner in which an innocent and helpless lamb yields to the knife of the destroyer.

“ Pleased to the last, it crops the flowery food,

“ And licks the hand just rais’d to shed it’s blood.”

So Jesus was brought as a lamb to the slaughter ; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. Not that he was altogether silent during the last scene of his sufferings, for even in the moments and

power of darkness he uttered many precious and divine sayings. But he opened not his mouth in repining at the dispensations of providence. No threatening or revenge, no word expressive of resentment or impatience escaped his sacred lips. When he was reviled, he reviled not again ; when he suffered, he threatened not ; but committed himself to him who judgeth righteously. “ Father,” said he, full of the spirit of resignation, “ not my will, “ but thine be done.” “ The cup which my “ Father hath given me to drink shall I not “ drink it ?” Full of the spirit of forgiveness, he prayed for his enemies ; full of the spirit of meekness, he bowed his head and gave up the ghost.

3. Jesus Christ is styled the Lamb of God, because he was offered up to his Father as a sacrifice for our sins. The offering of sacrifices constituted an important part of the ancient worship. The practice was, probably, of divine origin. Certain it is that it was sanctioned and enjoined by divine authority, under the Mosaick law. The true and proper notion of a sacrifice for sin appears to be that the victim is substituted in the place of the offender ; that his guilt is supposed to be transferred

to this substitute ; and, that, the slaying of the victim expiates the offence, and prevents the punishment of the transgressor. Hence, we see with what propriety Jesus is called the Lamb of God, or a sacrifice for sin. He assumed our nature, stood in our stead, and bore the guilt of our sins. Being thus substituted in our room, he was led a victim to God's altar, and there suffered the punishment due to the sins of his people. But, by this sacrifice of himself, he hath for ever perfected them who are sanctified, he hath satisfied divine justice, he hath abolished the guilt and punishment of the transgressors, and restored them into favour as if they had never offended. Of this extraordinary victim, the lambs, and bulls, and goats, formerly offered up in sacrifice, were merely types and figures. Hence, Jesus is called " the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," that is, not merely appointed unto death in the divine decrees, but slain figuratively, and by representation, in every animal which was presented at the altar. From this offering of infinite value, all former offerings derived their worth and efficacy. For it was impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats could take away sin, or that

the ashes of an heifer sprinkled over the unclean could purge the conscience from dead works. These were, merely, ceremonial and emblematical acts which became effectual to the expiation of guilt, in virtue of the divine appointment; and inasmuch as they were a sign of the faith of the offerer, in that true, proper and perfect expiation of sin which, in the fulness of time, was to be accomplished by the Son of God. In the same manner as the bread and wine, in the Holy Sacrament, convey, to those who receive them by faith, all the blessings derived from that death which they represent. Jesus, therefore, is called the Lamb of God, because, through the Eternal Spirit, he offered himself, without spot, unto him.

But though the propriety of this manner of expression be sufficiently evident, when we compare the death of Christ, in our stead, with the vicarious and expiatory nature of the victims which were commonly offered in sacrifice, it will appear still more beautiful if we consider it as alluding, more particularly, to the paschal lamb sacrificed at the feast of the passover; when the Israelites were delivered from Egyptian bondage, and a signal instance of the divine mercy was exhibited in the com-

mand given to the destroying angel, to slay the Egyptian first-born, but to pass over the houses of the Israelites.

That we are authorized to view it in this light, appears from many passages of scripture. The Apostle Paul expressly says, that, Christ is our passover who is sacrificed for us. And in numberless respects, the sacrifice of Christ may be compared with that of the paschal lamb. As the paschal lamb was killed on the evening before the Israelites were delivered from the bondage in which they were held by their oppressors in Egypt, so the sufferings and death of Christ were necessary to deliver us from the bondage of sin and Satan, and restore us to the liberty of God's children. As the paschal lamb was roasted with fire, so Christ was exposed to the most severe and acute sufferings from God, from men, and from devils. The blood of the paschal lamb sprinkled on the door-posts of the Israelites, saved them from the sword of the destroying angel, so the blood of Christ sprinkling the conscience of the sinner, silences the accusations of his own mind, screens him from the stroke of divine justice, and delivers him from death and eternal destruction. The paschal lamb was eaten

with bitter herbs, so we can derive no benefit from the sacrifice of Christ, unless our receiving of it be accompanied with the bitter pangs of repentance, mortification and self-denial.— The Israelites eat the paschal lamb standing, with their shoes on their feet, their staves in their hands, and, in every respect, like men ready to set out on a journey. So we who feed on the Lamb of God, must consider ourselves as strangers and sojourners on earth, must keep our affections detached from the present scene of oppression and sorrow, and, having our loins girt and our lights burning, be always ready to obey the call which summons us to our native country. But we must not indulge imagination, or follow the flights of fancy, on this sacred ground. Enough has been said to show, that the sacrifices and oblations under the law had a reference to Jesus Christ; that they were merely the shadow of him who was the substance, and, that, in him, the great antitype, all the types and figures of Judaism are realized and accomplished.

4. Jesus Christ is styled not only a Lamb, but, with some degree of limitation, the Lamb of God. And this, because, he was chosen and sent by God, he was dedicated unto God,

and the offering which he presented was truly grateful and well-pleasing to him. He himself tells us that he was sanctified and sent into the world by his Father, and St. Paul says, that, he took not his office unto himself, but was ordained of God, as was Aaron. Jesus was the true Nazarene, who was consecrated unto God from the womb, who, being early brought into the temple by the pious care of his mother, was again dedicated according to the forms of the law ; whose whole life was devoted not to his own glory, but to the glory of him who sent him. In short, he gave himself for us, a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour unto God, a sacrifice wherewith he was well pleased, a sacrifice dearer and more acceptable to him than thousands of lambs, and ten thousands of rivers of oil. But we cannot enlarge on these points which are only incidentally connected with the general subject.

II. We proceed now to inquire in what sense, and by what means, the Lamb of God taketh away the sin of the world.

1. He taketh away the guilt, and consequently, the punishment of sin. This he did, by bearing the guilt and enduring the punishment of sin. When Jesus undertook the of-

fice of mediator, the guilt of men was imputed to him. Though he did no sin himself, yet was he numbered among the transgressors, because he bore the sins of others. Being thus considered as guilty, he was also found liable to punishment; and this punishment he bore in his own body upon the tree, "for he was wounded for our transgressions, "he was bruised for our iniquities." Jesus Christ, by thus taking unto himself our guilt and punishment, has removed them both from us. That heavy load which would have sunk us down to the pit of destruction was transferred to our Substitute who was mighty to save. In virtue of that atonement which he made by the sacrifice of himself, we are deemed innocent and righteous, and are delivered from all the penal consequences of sin. There is, now, no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. The hand writing, which was against them, was nailed to the cross, and there obliterated. Their robes, formerly polluted with guilt, are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. God looks upon them with a reconciled countenance. The sons of men are, no longer, considered as strangers and outcasts, as children of wrath and disobe-

dience. A general act of oblivion and restoration has been passed. That vast cloud of guilt, which intercepted the rays of the divine benevolence, has been dispersed by the Sun of righteousness. The obstacles which prevented the intercourse between heaven and earth are removed ; and Jesus hath consecrated a new and living way into the holiest courts of God by pouring out his blood in obedience to the will of the Father. The ransom demanded by the Divine Justice has been paid, and the lawful captive has been delivered. But

2. The Lamb of God not only taketh away the guilt of Sin, but also the filth of it. He not only justifies, but he also sanctifies. Thus we are said to be redeemed from our vain conversation by the precious blood of Christ. While he delivers the world from the punishment due to sin, by abolishing their guilt and demerit, he, also, makes them capable of happiness, by overturning the dominion of sin in their hearts, by sanctifying their nature, and, gradually, bringing them to that state of perfection in virtue when they shall be free from every vice and impurity, when no evil passion or desire shall have strength to divert

them from their duty, when the image of God shall be formed anew within them, and they shall be perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect.

This destruction of the works of the devil, he accomplishes in various ways. First of all, he taketh away the sin of the world by the influence of his Holy Spirit. Such was the infinite value of the sacrifice which he offered, that it availed, not only, to produce an act of pardon, and a blotting out of transgression, and an exemption from punishment, but, also, various gifts and graces necessary to the regeneration, sanctification and comfort of his people. These seeds of holiness are implanted in the sinner, at the moment of conversion, through the operation of the blessed Spirit.—These, daily watered with the dew of heaven, spring up and flourish, bringing forth the fair fruits of faith and love, and every christian virtue. The weeds of sin are thereby rooted out. The old man with his deeds is put off. Their polluted natures are gradually washed, sanctified, and purified by the in-dwelling of the Holy Ghost, and the communication of those gifts and graces which Jesus purchased. Sin is taken away, and they who are followers of

the Lamb, and partake of the benefits derived from his sacrifice, walk in newness of life.

The Lamb of God also taketh away the sin of the world by that perfect example of every virtue which he exhibited. He presented a pattern worthy of all imitation ; he allured his disciples to virtue by the amiable excellence of his own character. He showed, by his life and conduct, how we may live in the world, unpolluted by it's vices, unseduced by it's pleasures, undismayed by it's dangers, and victorious over it's temptations.

The Lamb of God taketh away the sin of the world by the precepts which he delivered. These were so plain, that the most ignorant could understand them ; they were so pure, that they led forward their observers to perfection. No sin, not even the appearance of evil was tolerated by his perfect law. We are required to be perfect, as God is perfect, and holy, as he is holy. And what is more, this law is enforced by the most awful sanctions ; nothing less than glory, honour, and immortality to those who continue patient in well-doing, and tribulation and anguish to every son of man that doth evil. Could any thing be devised more effectual to discourage wicked-

ness and to take away sin, than the publication of a law forbidding every kind of sin, requiring absolute purity, and supported by such glorious promises, and by threatenings so terrible ?

In short ; the Lamb of God taketh away the sin of the world by those numerous motives and arguments which the consideration of his sacrifice for sin affords to induce us to forsake sin and follow after holiness. But these, the length of the important service which we have in view, prevents us from illustrating. Indeed, throughout the whole discourse, we have rather suggested hints to be prosecuted in your own minds, than given a complete illustration of any of the ideas which have passed in review before us.

Enough, I hope, has been said to direct you to a proper employment of your thoughts upon this solemn occasion ; to strengthen your faith in the merits of Christ's blood, and to animate you with love and gratitude to him who hath appeared once, in the end of the world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.—Remember always, that, as he, once, appeared as a lamb to take away the sin of the world, he will, hereafter, appear in the character of

a judge to deliver from punishment, and admit to the possession of endless and unspeakable joys those whom he has saved from guilt and corruption ; that, as he was, once, offered up to bear the sins of many, so to those who look for him he will appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

SERMON XI.

The character of Jonathan a model for imitation.

2 SAMUEL, CHAP. 1, VER. 23.

“Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their deaths they were not divided.”

THESE words are part of that beautiful elegy which the psalmist of Israel composed upon the occasion of the death of his beloved friend and companion, Jonathan. Let us, my brethren, engage in the profitable and pleasant contemplation of some of the most striking features in the character of this young prince, which is one of the most finished and perfect that occurs in the annals of the world. What was recorded in the historical parts of the Old Testament, was written for our instruction : and every character in sacred writ exhibits either a pattern for us to imitate, or an example of what we ought to avoid.

First, then, we behold in Jonathan, the brave warrior and the generous hero. True courage is not an animal principle, dependent on mere bodily strength, but is the offspring of reasoning and reflection. It is inseparable from virtue, which alone can render a man superiour to the fear of death, and enable him to brave danger without dismay. It is intimately connected with a belief of the divine superintendence, and a trust in the goodness of him who guardeth his servants as the apple of his eye, who preserveth them in the day of battle, so that “ though a thousand fall by
“ their side, and ten thousand at their right
“ hand, it doth not once come nigh unto
“ them.” Such was the bravery of that youthful prince whom David thus extols : “ The
“ beauty of Israel is slain upon the high places : how are the mighty fallen ! From the
“ blood of the slain, from the feet of the
“ mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not
“ back, and the sword of Saul returned not
“ empty. They were swifter than eagles,
“ they were stronger than lions.”

The valour of Jonathan is that feature in his character with which we are first made acquainted. For when the hosts of the Philis-

tines were gathered against Israel ; when many, even of the Hebrews, had deserted to them ; when the rest had fled for fear, and only six hundred men remained with his father Saul, Jonathan, fired with a love of glory, and accompanied only with his armour-bearer, boldly dared to attack the enemy's camp. Nor was this the effect of rashness or despair, but of a firm trust in the goodness of his cause, and in the support of the Lord of Hosts. " For Jonathan said to the young man that " bare his armour, Come, and let us go over " to the garrison of these uncircumcised : it " may be that the Lord will work for us : for " there is no restraint to the Lord, to save by " many or by few." Accordingly, the Philistines fell before Jonathan, they were dismayed and discomfited ; and the multitude melted away.

There is no quality which so much commands our esteem, admiration and love as that of courage, especially when accompanied with that humanity and generosity which are inseparable from true valour. It wins the heart of all who behold it. Soldiers will obey with cheerfulness, and follow with alacrity, the general whom they love ; and they cannot

fail to love him who fears not to expose his own person to danger ; who, though sparing of the blood of his people, is prodigal of his own. This was strikingly exemplified on the very day on which the Philistines were defeated. For when the king drew the people together, in order to discover who had made them to sin by tasting food, contrary to his express charge, they, at first, refused to reveal the person who had committed the crime, and when it was found out by lot, that, Jonathan had unwittingly transgressed his father's commandment, and was sentenced to die, the people interposed and said unto Saul, "shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel ? God forbid : as the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground : for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not."

But, farther, we behold in Jonathan the disinterested *patriot*. Patriotism, among the ancient moralists, was reckoned the first of virtues. The maxim was deeply engraven on the minds of the old, and endeavoured to be impressed on the young that "it is pleasant and honourable to die for one's country." Under the

christian dispensation this principle, as well as that of private friendship, though not entirely forgotten, seems, in a great measure, to be superseded by that more exalted one of love to God, or absorbed in that more enlarged and comprehensive precept of universal love to mankind, whether friends or foes, countrymen or foreigners. Compared with this new commandment, the love of one's country is a narrow and contracted principle. In the ancient world, it served, for the most part, as a cloak to ambition and a love of conquest: it inspired a hatred and contempt of all other nations; and, it too often usurped the place of that love which we owe to the Supreme Being. I do not mean, however, to disparage this virtue. Decent and honourable and glorious it certainly is, to sacrifice our peculiar interest, our happiness and our life for the good of the whole, in a proper cause. This principle has been the parent of many a noble and virtuous deed. It has strengthened the warriour's arm in the day of battle; it has lightened the labours of the legislator; it has roused the statesman in the hour of danger, and awakened the slothful from the lap of repose to listen to the call of honour and of glory.

In the days of Jonathan the Philistines were yet numerous in the land of Canaan. The Israelites lived in continual fear of them, and subjected to their yoke, often suffered the most grievous oppression. But Jonathan stood forward as the champion of his native land. In him his countrymen found a gallant leader, and their enemies a formidable foe. His patriotism, too, was of the purest and most disinterested kind. If we examine the principles and motives of the actions of many who appear patriots and zealous lovers of their country, we will often find some degree of selfishness connected with those which are reckoned most generous and disinterested. Many have fought and risked their lives for a country which they have afterwards enslaved.

Among all the characters to which history has given a name, Jonathan was perhaps the most devoid of this selfishness. No future prospect of personal advantage entered into his views. To avenge his country's wrongs and to defend it from the oppression of its enemies, was all his ambition, and all his reward.—The tribe from which he sprang had been attacked and almost annihilated by the other tribes. But former injuries and particular re-

sentment were lost and forgotten in the common cause, and his country's call repressed every emotion of revenge. On account of the wickedness of his father, the kingdom which Saul had obtained by lot, was taken from him and from his family, and bestowed upon another whom the Lord had chosen. This, however, did not in the least diminish the ardour of Jonathan's patriotism, or prevent him at last from sacrificing his life in defence of the national honour, and in support of a kingdom which he knew he was not to inherit,

Again, we behold in Jonathan the pious and good man. Piety to God is a mingled sentiment of love and reverence for the Supreme Being. It leads to worship and obedience, and, above all, to resignation and humble submission to the decrees of heaven. This part of Jonathan's character appeared in the readiness with which he submitted to the will of God, in a point which men have reckoned most valuable, and about which they have contended with the greatest violence. Who can read of the many evils which the love of power has produced in the world, of the many men who have shut the gates of mercy on mankind, and waded through slaughter to a

throne, and not behold with admiration and delight the pious submission and calm indifference of Jonathan, who resigned a crown to which he had been born, and which he was well qualified to wear, in favour of another ; because God had determined to take the kingdom from the family of Saul, and give it to a neighbour of his who was better than he. No impious murmuring is heard against the decree of heaven. No open combination or secret intrigue is formed to defeat it's operation. On the contrary, Jonathan does every thing in his power to promote the designs of the Almighty. For often did he save the life of David from the fury and malice of his father ; and often did he supply his necessities, and encourage his heart, when forced to wander, as a fugitive, in the desert. “ And David saw that Saul was come to seek his life : “ and David was in the wilderness in a wood. “ And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went “ to David into the wood, and strengthened “ his hand in God ; and said unto him, “ Fear not, for the hand of Saul, my father, “ shall not find thee : and thou shalt be king “ over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee. “ And that, also, Saul, my father, knoweth.

“ And they two made a covenant before the “ Lord.” We are not to imagine that, like Esau, he threw away the blessing because he knew not it’s value, or that he gave it up through fear and cowardice. The extent of his understanding, which was evident in his whole conduct ; the love of the people, which he completely possessed ; and his determined bravery, prevent such conclusions. What, then, was the motive of his action ? It was submission to the will of God, who had raised his father to the throne, and had appointed David to succeed him : and that very circumstance, which made Saul seek his life, increased Jonathan’s regard ; namely, that he was the chosen and anointed of the Lord. There is not another principle in human nature, but this humble submission to God, that is capable of inspiring such great and generous sentiments. Without this, his character would have been incomplete : from this, all his other qualities derive an additional lustre.

Next, we behold in Jonathan a loving and affectionate son, filial love and respect is one of those affections which nature has implanted in our frame ; which does not arise from any peculiar merit in the object of it, but from the

relation in which the persons loving and beloved stand to one another ; and the want of this affection must be deemed monstrous, wicked and unnatural. “ Honour thy father and thy mother,” says the commandment, “ that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” “ The eye that mocketh at his father,” saith Solomon, “ and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.” It has, however, been often observed, that, the affection of parents to children is stronger than that of children to parents. Nature has wisely ordained that our desires and passions should look forward, and that our cares should be applied where they are most wanted. In the breast of the children a more imperious passion usurps the place of filial affection ; and a new progeny arises, whose weakness and wants call forth all their love and regard. This remark does not seem justified in the case of Saul and Jonathan. Saul, a wicked and cruel tyrant, suddenly raised to empire, had some of the talents of a warrior, but none of the virtues of a man. On one occasion, he was led by a rash vow to sentence his son to

death ; and on another, in a fit of passion, he aimed a javelin at his life. But all this did not exasperate the virtuous prince or alienate his affections from his parent. Saul was a bad man, who could claim no respect or esteem, for his personal qualities ; he was rejected of God, his disobedience had lost the kingdom to its lawful heir : the friendship of Jonathan with his father's enemy and rival put his affection to the severest trial ; yet still he acted the part of a faithful subject and a dutiful son. He did not associate himself with the desperate and discontented who resorted to David, and tried to overturn the government ; but always displayed the most respectful submission and obedience. He viewed Saul as his father ; the guardian and protector of his early days, whom nature and gratitude taught him to love and reverence. And as *Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives so in their deaths they were not divided*. For Jonathan followed to the last his father's fortunes : and glory, patriotism and filial affection dug his tomb in the mountains of Gilboa.

There is, indeed, one part of his conduct which may seem disloyal and disobedient in the son of a King. “ Saul spoke to Jonathan

“ his son and to all his servants that they should
“ kill David. And Jonathan delighted much
“ in David and told him, saying, Saul my fa-
“ ther seeketh to kill thee.” But it must be
observed that by this caution to David he was
preserving his father from shedding innocent
blood; and besides, like a man of honour and
integrity, he openly expostulated with Saul
concerning the crime he meditated. “ And
“ Jonathan spoke good of David ;” and laid
hold of that circumstance which would have
aggravated the sin of Saul, had he taken Da-
vid’s life : “ his works have been to thee-ward
“ very good. Did he not risk his life for thee?
“ did he not slay the Philistine ? and did not
“ the Lord by his means work a great salvation
“ in Israel ?” But Jonathan had another mo-
tive for this earnest entreaty with his father ;
David was his friend, and he loved him as he
loved his own soul. This leads me to ob-
serve, that,

In Jonathan we behold a generous, disin-
terested, zealous, and constant *friend*. This is
that feature of his character which has render-
ed his name so renowned, and which has em-
balmed his memory in the hearts of all the
virtuous and good. In courage, in patriot-

ism, in piety, in filial affection he has been equalled : his friendship for David exceeds every thing that history has recorded or that fancy has, ever, imagined.

His prudence and generosity, in the choice of a friend, are, truly, worthy of admiration. Between the birth and situation of Jonathan and of David there was the greatest disparity. The one was the son of a king, educated in the refinement and luxury of a court ; the other the son of a shepherd, and the keeper of his father's flocks. Was there none among the nobles of Israel, with whom interest might have impelled an association ? The kingdom was not unalterably fixed in the house of Saul ; and, therefore, a grovelling mind would have sold his friendship to the leaders of a party, or to those who could yield the greatest return of influence. But, the mind of Jonathan was without selfishness, and David was the man of his choice.

The occasion on which the friendship of Jonathan and David commenced, likewise deserves our attention.

Friendships are often formed upon slight and improper grounds. An accidental encounter, an association in business or plea-

sure, or the prospect of some advantage, credit or support to be derived from those whose acquaintance we court, has given rise to the greatest number of friendships which exist in the world. No such motive influenced the friendship of Jonathan for David. David was introduced into the court of Saul in a capacity extremely well calculated to recommend him to a young man, and especially to a young prince. “David,” says the sacred narrative, “came to Saul and stood before him, and took “a harp and played with his hand, and Saul “loved him greatly, and he became his armour-bearer.” While he remained in this situation, though he was not an object of envy or emulation, and, at the same time, had the fairest opportunity of displaying agreeable qualities, Jonathan distinguished him not ; and, it is likely, if he had continued in this station, his heart would never have honoured him with it’s affection. David was of too great and independent a soul to become a courtier. He would not gain the favour even of a prince, by trifling circumstances of attention, or by the mean arts of flattery. He would not stoop to recommend himself, by encouraging the vices, or ministering to the

pleasures of his patron. Jonathan, moreover, was too wise and discerning a prince to be imposed on by the flattery of an armour-bearer, or to be attracted by the superficial qualities of a musician. There is a congeniality of soul, a similarity of feeling necessary to the existence of true and steady friendship. Jonathan was a brave and great man, and admired and loved in others those qualities which he possessed himself. The champion of the Philistines had defied the host of Israel. The mighty in battle shrunk back from his superiour strength. Even the king's son declined the unequal combat. In this situation David stept forth, and, in the strength of his God, slew the Philistine. Judging from the practice of the world, we would naturally expect, that the splendour of this action should excite envy in those who had not performed it. A person less magnanimous than Jonathan, instead of receiving the successful hero into his favour and friendship, would have viewed him with illiberal, jealous and hostile eyes, and would have done every thing in his power to suppress his rising greatness. But Jonathan was superiour to envy, which is the vice of little minds, and felt in his heart what one brave

man feels for another. This was the very time when he conceived the first affection for David. “For when he returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Saul inquired at him, whose son art thou? And it came to pass, when he made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David; and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.” And, as a token of his esteem, as a pledge of his friendship, “he stript himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garment, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.”

Unlike the friendships of the world, which, for the most part, have some selfish object in view, the friendship of Jonathan was most pure and disinterested. This appears most evidently from his sacrificing the fairest prospect of greatness and power to his attachment to his friend. He knew that David was to succeed to the sovereign power. For when they wished to know how far the wrath of Saul was carried against David, the king upbraided his son for his attachment: “Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman,” says he, “do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of

“ Jesse to thine own confusion ? For as long
“ as the son of Jesse liveth on the ground,
“ thou shalt not be established, nor thy king-
“ dom.” But the affection of Jonathan was
not changed or diminished. He saw David
grow in favour with the people. He knew
that he was to succeed to the throne. Every
thing which men reckon good and valuable
was at stake. The man of his choice was his
competitor in these fair prospects, but his
friendship for him remained stable. He sub-
mitted to be the second in that kingdom in
which, from the possession of his father, he
had the best claim to be the first. He made
the sacrifice, too, at the time when the sacri-
fice was greatest : when he had not expe-
rienced the uneasiness of power, and when the
expectation of it is most apt to flatter the
youthful imagination.

Finally, the friendship of Jonathan was zealous, constant and unshaken. The surviving friend extols the strength and ardour of his affection in these beautiful strains : “ I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan : very pleasant hast thou been unto me : thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.” Nor was this a momentary

glow of affection, which disgusts and disappointments and reverses are apt to cool. The friendship of Jonathan was not, like the friendship of too many in the world,

“ A shade which follows wealth or fame,
“ But leaves the wretch to weep.”

His admiration and love were not confined to the day on which he beheld David returning, loaded with the spoils of the Philistine, and heard him celebrated in the songs of the daughters of Israel. In every situation, even the most distressful and adverse, he was to David a firm and unshaken friend. When driven in disgrace from the court, and forced to flee for his life ; when wandering in the wilderness, destitute of every necessary, and forsaken by his attendants ; Jonathan's friendship was not abated. And, whenever his duty to his king, and his respect for his father, permitted him, he flew with eagerness to his assistance and relief. David and Jonathan were actuated, as it were, by one soul. They burned with the same love, and glowed with the same resentments. They felt each other's pains, and shared in each other's sorrows. What can be more

tender and interesting? what can better display the strength of Jonathan's friendship, than when he went, at the risk of his father's displeasure, and of his own life, to warn David to leave his lurking place and seek for safety in flight? When they were alone, "David
"arose out of a place toward the south, and
"fell on his face toward the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed
"one another, and wept one with another,
"until David exceeded. And Jonathan said
"to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we
• "have sworn both of us in the name of the
"Lord, saying, the Lord be between my seed
"and thy seed for ever."

What friendship was like unto this friendship! With whom, O! Jonathan! can we compare thee, but with Jesus the friend and patron of the human race; whose love to us was stronger than death. "We envy thee
"not that thou wast the son of a king: that
"thou wast a successful warrior, and that
"thou diedst fighting the battles of thy country. But we envy thee thy generous, honest and disinterested heart. Thou wast the
"friend of distressed innocence: the friend

“ of mankind. Envy thee, did we say ?
“ Rather we desire to esteem and emulate
“ thy virtues, that, like thee, we may live be-
“ loved, and die lamented.”

SERMON XII.

The young warned against the dangers that most easily beset them.

1 KINGS, CHAP. 20, VER. 11.

“Let not him that girdeth on his harness, boast himself as he that putteth it off.”

MANKIND, in general, seem to judge of human life, and indeed of every thing else, more by their present feelings and dispositions, than by a calm attention to the nature of things. Hence, the appearance which the world presents to different men, varies according to their several tempers and characters. To the man whom misfortune has deprived of the external sources of pleasure, or whom wickedness or infirmity has rendered incapable of enjoying the good things which he possesses, human life appears a barren and dreary wilderness, and the whole face of nature seems overspread with a settled gloom. On the oth-

er hand, the man whose natural temper is contented and cheerful, who enjoys the blessings of uninterrupted health, who is successful in his enterprises and happy in his connections, feels a constant gaiety of spirits, which enlivens every scene around him, and he imagines himself placed in a flowery and fruitful paradise, where the thorn of sorrow will never spring up to perplex his path : and he seems to live under a serene and bright horizon which, he thinks, will never be overcast with the clouds of adversity.

In no instance is this partial and prejudiced judgment of things more visible than in the sanguine expectations which youth usually form of their condition and character in future life. Having had little experience of the uncertainty which attends all human pursuits, they promise themselves the most unlimited success before they commence their attempts to acquire the gifts of fortune. They hope, that, the industry of a few years will be rewarded with all the blessings of affluence and independence. Conscious of the benevolence and generosity of their own dispositions, and unacquainted with the disguises which are assumed, and the artifices which are practised

in the world, their hearts are warmed with the idea of disinterested affection, and they expect to find in every gay companion, a sage adviser, a sincere and faithful friend. Having never measured the extent of their abilities, they flatter themselves that they are capable of making improvements, and executing designs, which shall surprise the world, and crown them with immortal honour. Having never tried the strength of their moral powers, or observed the snares which beset the path of unsuspecting innocence, they presume that they shall find it no difficult task to preserve their integrity inviolate, and their reputation unblemished ; and to persevere in a course of uncorrupted and distinguished virtue to the end of their lives. “ But let not him that
“ girdeth on his harness, boast himself as he
“ that putteth it off.”

Considering this proverbial maxim as an admonition which may be, with great propriety, addressed to young men, to guard them against that presumption and confidence to which they are peculiarly liable ; I shall in this discourse endeavour to convince you my young brethren, of the great necessity and importance of caution and circumspection, at

your first entrance into the world, by pointing out some of the dangers to which you are exposed, and, by exhorting you not to be too confident in your opinions, not to be too sanguine in your expectations, not to be too secure of your virtue.

I. Be not too confident in your opinions. Nothing is more amiable in all orders of men, and particularly in the young, than modesty and diffidence. It is a certain proof of rising merit ; it indicates a good understanding not to be positive in deciding, where we have not sufficient knowledge and experience to direct us ; and it gains the good will of all, for it offends the self-love of none. On the contrary, nothing is more ill-founded and disagreeable, and yet nothing more common with the young, than a conceit of their own abilities, and an obstinate adherence to their own opinions. But be not ye wise in your own conceits, and learn not to think of yourselves more highly than you ought. Those untried abilities which you, now, think adequate to every undertaking, experience will, hereafter, teach you to distrust. You have, as yet, had, comparatively, but few opportunities of improvement ; your experience is nothing, and your acquaint-

tance with the world extremely limited ; your minds are not sufficiently matured and improved by reading and conversation. Submit therefore to the wiser and more experienced ; receive their opinions, and listen to their advice. At any rate, presume not to dictate to them, or imagine that your unfledged fancies, your crude conceptions, are to rectify the ancient constitution of things, and supplant those received opinions and customs which are founded on the wisdom of ages. Nothing is more unjust or unsafe than to judge of any thing by first appearances. It is seldom, but that opinions, formed in this way, are found by experience to be extremely erroneous. Few men have lived long in the world without finding that in many things they had mistaken ; without altering, in many material respects, the opinions which they once firmly entertained concerning men and things. And many more have blundered on in error because they were too obstinate, or were ashamed to retract sentiments, which, in former times, they had rashly adopted or positively defended. Self-conceit is a fatal enemy to advancement, it shuts up every avenue to improvement, it prevents you from pressing for-

ward to perfection, it robs you of that wholesome counsel which is so absolutely necessary to the young and inexperienced. If you set out in the world with diffidence, docility, and a disposition to learn from others, you will not fail to receive that encouragement, assistance and success which always attend modest merit. But if, with an overweening opinion of your own abilities, you trust wholly to yourselves, and the wisdom of your own plans, you will meet with nothing but opposition, disappointment and disgrace.

II. This leads me to exhort you, in the second place, not to be too sanguine in your expectations. Do not flatter yourself with the hope of passing your days in uninterrupted tranquillity and pleasure, or imagine, that, you shall be exempted from the common evils and calamities of human life. Because you are at present blessed with a robust and healthful constitution, and are capable of enjoying with delight, and even with rapture, the scenes of amusement and indulgence which solicit your attention on every side ; infer not from hence, that, the objects around you will continually wear the same gay and attractive aspect, or that you will always be able to relish

the delights which they are calculated to afford. Remember, that, all sensual pleasures are unstable and precarious, and depend upon circumstances which it is not in your power to control ; that you are liable every hour of your lives to be seized with disorders which would entirely destroy your appetite for these pleasures, and under which the richest and most luxurious entertainments, the fairest objects of nature, and the most enchanting melody of sounds would be insipid, tiresome, and offensive. In short, that even, if you should meet with no interruption in your pursuit of pleasure from external causes, yet the seeds of satiety and disappointment are sown in the very frame of your nature, and in a short time, much shorter than you may be willing to imagine, those objects which now captivate your whole attention will lose all their charms, and be no longer able to give you delight and entertainment.

You are perhaps entering upon the world, with all the advantages of a liberal education, agreeable connections, a fair character, and an honourable, advantageous employment. With all these favourable circumstances you may possibly think, that, your prospect of suc-

cess and happiness in future life amounts to little less than an absolute certainty ; you begin your career with a confident assurance that you shall obtain the prize ; you promise yourselves, that, “ to morrow shall be as this “ day, and much more abundant.” But consider, I beseech you, on what a precarious foundation your towering hopes are built, and how soon they may all be levelled with the ground. Suppose the friends in whom you confide, should, from some real or imaginary provocation, desert your interests, and employ that influence against you which you expected them to exert in your favour. Suppose that some designing villain should have art and malice enough to rob you of your good name, or should, by some fraudulent device, deprive you of the possessions which you hoped to make the basis of your future happiness. Suppose, that, in the course of business you should take an imprudent and injudicious step at a season and in an affair of critical importance, and thus involve yourselves in inextricable difficulties. Or, lastly, suppose that it should please the wise disposer of all things, to suffer some calamitous accident to frustrate at once all your schemes, blast all your hopes,

and overwhelm you with disappointment and misery. Suppose any one of these cases to happen (and any one of them may happen to the wisest and the best of men) where then would be all your flattering hopes of wealth, your airy dreams of greatness? Do we not often, in fact, see those who, at their first entrance on life, were surrounded with every advantage which could promise success, meeting with a series of misfortunes which depress their rising hopes, and at last sink them down under the united burden of disappointment and misery.

Learn, then, to moderate your expectations with regard to the portion of external good which awaits you in future life. Entertain no extravagant ideas of the happiness which this world is capable of affording, and you will be the better disposed to enjoy that share of it which divine providence shall bestow. Expect your part of those calamities which are the common lot of mortality, and you will be the better prepared to endure them with fortitude whenever they arrive.

III. At the same time, that, I exhort you not to be too sanguine in your hopes of happiness and success in this life, suffer me also, in

the third place, to advise you not to be too secure of your virtue ; not to trust too much to the strength of your virtuous principles, or to imagine that your innocence and integrity are safe beyond all danger of violation.

You have, perhaps, enjoyed the advantages of a virtuous education. From your earliest years, you have received strong impressions in favour of religion, from the wise instructions and pious example of your parents and friends. With your infant breath you imbibed a sense of honour, a love of virtue, and a reverence for the Almighty. And these principles have been continually gaining strength as you advanced in years and experience. You may therefore, perhaps, imagine that you will never be tempted to deviate from the path of innocence, and to follow a multitude to do evil. You may, perhaps, imagine that it cannot be in the power of any allurements whatever to shake your resolution, and betray you into irregular and vicious practices. But remember the advice of the wise son of Sirach, “ be not “ confident in a plain way.” The path of virtue, though steep, is plain ; it is the way of pleasantness, and the path of peace. But it is beset with snares of which you must be

warned, and in the midst of which you must walk circumspectly, if you would be secure from falling. It is only by warily directing the paths of your feet that all your ways can be established. That you may be fully sensible of the necessity of circumspection and diffidence, permit me to remind you of some of the principal dangers to which your virtue is exposed.

1. You have appetites and passions implanted in your nature, which, if left without control, will lead you into irregular and vicious indulgence. It is true that the animal as well as the rational part of our nature is of divine original, and, as such, cannot be supposed to have any thing in it defective or corrupt. It is no less true that the animal appetites, being the gift of a wise and merciful Creator, are designed to be a source of enjoyment, and ought, under certain restrictions, to be gratified. But it is likewise true, that they are capable of being abused and perverted, so as to involve us in vice and misery, and it is only when they are regulated by the superiour principles of reason and conscience, that they are productive of real happiness. The world affords many melancholy facts to prove the fatal ef-

fects of indulging irregular and unlawful desires. The youngest of us, who are capable of observation and reflection, must have seen instances of persons whose health has been impaired, whose fortune has been wasted, whose reputation has been blasted, and whose peace of mind has been destroyed by following pleasures into the haunts of licentiousness and excess. There are few young persons who have not, at some seasons, been convinced, from their own experience, of the hazard to which our virtue is exposed by the inferiour appetites and passions of our nature.

But this is not your only danger. There are many external circumstances, which concur with your internal constitution, to tempt you to transgress the laws of sobriety and virtue. Numerous are the examples of vicious indulgence which attract your notice, and solicit your imitation, on every side. And of these there are not a few whose vices are blended with so many amiable accomplishments, that there is great danger, lest, while you pay the respect which is due to the latter, a prejudice in favour of the former should, unawares, steal into your hearts. While you admire the agreeable companion, and love the kind and

faithful friend, it will require no small degree of attention and care, not to mistake his foibles for excellencies, and his vices for virtues. And, when vicious examples are, thus, recommended and thus disguised, what can be expected but that the youthful mind, which is, in all cases, so powerfully governed by the principle of imitation, will be totally captivated and enslaved ?

No inconsiderable degree of hazard, likewise, arises from that cheerfulness of temper, and gaiety of heart which in itself is, not only, innocent, but highly ornamental and agreeable. It is in the season of unreserved and unrestrained conversation, in the social hour, when calm reflection and sober wisdom give place to mirth and festivity, that youthful virtue is most unguarded and most frequently betrayed. I presume not to censure, I wish not to discourage that propensity to social intercourse which is so natural to youth, and which is the source of so many rational and innocent pleasures. I am not insensible that friendly, social and cheerful converse is the best cordial of life. But, it is necessary that you should be warned of the snares which lie concealed in this flowery path ; snares in which many a

heedless passenger hath been caught to his utter infamy and ruin. The boundary between harmless gaiety and licentious pleasure is so faintly marked, that, it is no wonder if, at seasons when we are more agreeably employed than in taking heed to our goings, we should sometimes pass over, from the one to the other, before we are aware.

Your virtue is farther exposed to danger from a quarter, from which one is least apt to suppose that any thing evil can come; from that pliability of disposition and desire of obliging, which, in young persons, is peculiarly amiable and pleasing. Perhaps it has been through the influence of this disposition, mixed with too great a regard to the opinion of the world, that most of those young persons who have given themselves up to vicious indulgence, have been at first tempted to trespass the bounds of innocence. There is something in vice at which the heart of man, in its uncorrupted state, strongly revolts; and there are few young persons so totally devoid of moral feelings as to be able, at first, to commit a bad action, merely, for the sake of the pleasure which attends it. But false shame, an excess of good nature, a fear of giving offence,

of incurring ridicule, or being thought singular, and an ambition of being applauded as a youth of spirit and an agreeable companion, have often corrupted those hearts which the charms of vicious pleasures alone, without these aids, would never have allured. The maxim of Solomon is founded in nature, and confirmed by experience that “the fear of man bringeth a snare.”

But if licentious pleasure, with all its native attractions, and all its adventitious support, should be unable to seduce, still your virtue is far from being secure. The world has other temptations in store for you which it will require the exertion of all your wisdom and fortitude to resist. Wealth, that idol at whose shrine such multitudes are willing to bow, will use a thousand arts to place you among the number of her votaries. She will endeavour to convince you that ease and indulgence, pleasure and happiness, respect and honour are at her disposal ; and it is well if she do not at last persuade you to seek her rewards at the expense of your integrity, your peace of mind, and your hope of immortality. Ambition too, will strongly tempt you to pursue the delusive phantoms which she raises be-

fore your imagination, through all the mazes of injustice, oppression, flattery, dissimulation and corruption. By the false lustre which these objects assume, thousands have been deluded. In search of the happiness which they promise, thousands have relinquished all the noble pursuits, and resigned all the substantial pleasures of wisdom and virtue. Imagine not, then, that you are invincibly armed against the assaults of these subtle and powerful adversaries. Flatter not yourselves that your danger is past before you have begun the combat ; or think that you shall obtain a cheap and easy conquest. “ Let not him that girdeth on his harness, boast himself as he that putteth it off.”

Such are the difficulties, such the dangers to which you are exposed, which you must expect to meet with in your passage through life. Judge ye, whether you have any room for confidence and presumption, whether your situation doth not require all the caution and circumspection which you can command.

It is not, however, the design of what has been said to fill you with gloomy ideas of human life, to discourage you in the pursuit of happiness, or the practice of virtue, or to in-

cline you to sit down in indolence and despair. Though you are liable to disappointments and calamities, you may, also, reasonably hope to enjoy, even in this world, a considerable share of felicity. Though your virtue be exposed to many trials, though temptations surround you on every side, it is still in your power, by the blessing and assistance of God, to hold fast your integrity, and continue stedfast and immovable in the practice of your duty. Be not, then, discouraged by difficulties, or terrified by dangers. Be cautious and diffident, but be not timid or desponding. In circumspection lies your safety : on diligence and resolution depend your improvement and happiness. Let me, therefore, recommend to your serious consideration and practical regard the following points of advice, which, for want of time, I can only mention, but which are too plain to stand in need of much illustration.

Be diffident of your own abilities, express your opinions with modesty, and without obstinate opposition to those of greater experience and wisdom. Be slow to speak, patient to hear, and willing to learn. This is the surest road to wisdom, and the best claim to esteem.

Be moderate in your wishes and expecta-

tions of happiness. Nay, lay your account with disappointment and misfortune. Thus you will be better prepared to bear calamity, if it should come ; and if prosperity, only, should be poured into your cup, it will be the greater from it's being unexpected.

Be careful in the choice of your friends. Be not rash in forming connections. Above all things, avoid the society of the wicked. For evil communications corrupt good manners, and the companion of fools shall be destroyed.

Guard against the first beginning, the smallest appearance of evil. Say not, it is a little thing. Unimportant as it may be in itself, it leaves behind it a stain which will not so easily be removed. Every the most trifling transgression tends to widen the breach. When the constitution is once affected with the disease of sin, no medicine but divine grace can stop it's progress. It eateth as a canker, and biteth as a serpent.

Be careful and diligent to impress upon your minds a sense of God and of religion. For this purpose, dedicate a portion of your time to the reading of the sacred scriptures, and religious compositions. Neglect not the impor-

tant duty of private prayer, or, what is equally important, attendance on publick worship. Seek, as the first object of your life, to obtain the favour of God ; and remember, for your encouragement, that, they who seek him early shall find him. Without this, all hope of happiness and success in life were vain : possessed of this, you have the best reason for trust and confidence. His arm can give strength to the weak. His grace will enable you to resist every temptation. His comforts will delight your souls in the day of adversity and distress.

SERMON XIII.

*Funeral sermon on the death of the Reverend
J. Malcomson.*

PHILIPPIANS, CHAP. 21, VER. 1.

“For to me, to die is gain.”

DEATH has been styled the king of terrors, *through fear of whom many are all their life-time subject to bondage.* And, indeed, if we consider this event as nothing but a cessation of existence, as a restoration of the dust of which we are formed to its original source, it is natural to expect that creatures, actuated by a strong desire of self-preservation, should feel impressions of sadness and dejection when they look forward to its approach. To bid an eternal adieu to those whom affection and friendship have entwined around our hearts; to shut our eyes for ever to the cheerful light of day, and all the scenes of former enjoyment; to be deprived of sense and motion,

and stretched a lifeless corse upon the earth ; to descend into the dark and noisome mansion of the grave, and there become the food of worms : these circumstances, attending this awful change, form a picture which the coldest imagination cannot contemplate without horror. In this point of view death could not possibly be gain to any one. It might justly be deemed inconsistent with the character of a wise and benevolent being, to permit the existence of an evil, which thus, without intermission, lays waste his fair creation ; which sweeps away in succession the ages and the nations ; which holds us in terror during life, and closes the scene by reducing us to ashes. Were death nothing else but this, far from inviting you, as we do on occasions of this nature, to contemplate this melancholy subject ; instead of vainly endeavouring to reconcile you to an event which would rob you of all your present comforts, and bring you nothing in return, we would advise you to turn your eyes from the dreary prospect, to put the evil day far from you, to spend your years in gaiety and pleasure, and never once permit a thought of death to intrude upon your joys. In this case, it would certainly be an act of prudence,

to enjoy as much of this world as you possibly could ; the maxim of the sensualist would then be founded in the truest wisdom—*let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.*

But, when we view death in the light which reason and religion throw upon it ; when we consider it as a deliverance from all those “ills “ which flesh is heir to,” as a state of sacred tranquillity and repose ; when we reflect that it introduces the virtuous and good into a state of greater perfection and happiness, than eye hath seen, or ear heard, or heart conceived, then the frown of this dreaded tyrant softens into the smile of a deliverer and friend ; we are no longer held in bondage by a slavish dread of his approach ; we then adopt the language of the Apostle, that for us “to die “ is gain ;” with him, we “desire to depart, “ and to be with Christ.”

Such a view of death, it must be confessed, belongs not to men of every character. To those who are so firmly attached to the pursuits and pleasures of this life, that they can conceive nothing beyond the grave capable of balancing their loss ; who, unconscious of the beauties of holiness, have no desire to be delivered from this body of sin and death ; whose guilty con-

sciences appal them with the awful anticipation of a future reckoning, death must in every point of view be full of terroure. Those very circumstances which make it gain to the righteous, to these only sharpen its sting. To view it as a complete annihilation of their being, would be a melancholy kind of satisfaction. But how dreadful to know that it is not only the conclusion of all present enjoyments, but also the commencement of a state of just and awful retribution ! Still, perhaps, if not pleasing, it may be useful for them to meditate on this subject, because bitter reflections at present may prevent endless sorrows hereafter. The illustration which we now propose of the Apostle's assertion ; that to those who live by the energy of Christ's spirit dwelling in them, who live for his honour and glory, and in conformity to the precepts of his blessed religion, death is no evil but a great gain, may happily excite in the wicked a desire of attaining the same enviable privilege, a wish to "die the death of the righteous," and to have "their last end like his !"

Death was no part of our original constitution. Had we continued innocent, our happiness had known no interruption. Pain and

evil could not have existed in the works of God. But man, being in honour, abode not. He who was created happy, is now born to trouble : He who once had access to the pure stream of immortality, must now taste the bitter waters of death. Such are the rewards, O sin ! which thou bestowest on thy deluded votaries. But, thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ ! thy purposes are defeated. Death, the great instrument of thy cruelties on the human race, proves a sovereign remedy for all the evils which thou hast introduced into the world. Though the believer is subject, like the unbeliever, to all the natural consequences, both temporal and spiritual, of sin, and consequently is not exempted from the stroke of death ; yet, in virtue of Christ's expiatory sacrifice, its penal effects are abolished. From being a punishment and an evil, it is graciously and wisely converted into a blessing and a gain.

That death itself should be abolished, with respect to the righteous, would be altogether inconsistent with the plan of Providence, and with the whole nature and intention of the gospel scheme. A privilege so exalted, and a distinction so manifest, bestowed on a particu-

lar class of men, would render unnecessary all motives and exhortations to holiness, would destroy all freedom of action, and annihilate at once virtue and vice, reward and punishment. And in the present imperfect and corrupted state of human nature, an universal exemption from the sentence of death, would be unwise and contrary both to private and publick interest. The fear of this event deters men from the commission of many sins dishonourable to God, ruinous to themselves, and destructive to society. Every law must be enforced by the hope of reward and the fear of punishment. To maintain that the love of God, and a regard to duty, are sufficient motives to virtuous conduct, presupposes in human nature a degree of perfection which is inconsistent with fact, and with which the existence of prohibitory laws would be incompatible. This being the case, what punishment can we imagine better calculated than death, to influence beings actuated by a strong desire of self-preservation? What principle is found, in fact, to operate more powerfully in preserving the peace and good order of society, in restraining the vices and crimes of men, and in exciting us to keep our powers and faculties

in the state fittest for the service of our Maker and of our fellow-men ? What but the fear of death secures us from the attack of the nightly robber, or deters the abandoned villain from the perpetration of his wicked designs ? Were it impossible to “kill the body,” men of licentious characters, insensible to shame, might indulge, without restraint, every criminal and lawless desire. What prevents many from gratifying indiscriminately every appetite, from addicting themselves to luxury, intemperance and debauchery, but the apprehension that the pursuit of these courses will produce disease and death, and thereby put an end for ever to their enjoyments ? In order to discharge with propriety our duty to God, and to our neighbour, our body must be maintained in a state of health, activity and vigour ; our mind must be free from passion and the empire of lust. Now one of the strongest motives to the proper regulation of our mental and corporeal powers, is the consideration that a well regulated state of mind and body, is not only favourable to the discharge of our duty, but also contributes to long life, and retards, more than all the aid of medicine, the approach of the much dreaded foe. For who have attain-

ed to a good old age but the sober, the active and the industrious, whose powers have not been enfeebled by pleasure, whose minds have not been harassed by the cares of gain, agitated by the pursuits of ambition, worn down by the gnawings of envy, nor tormented by the pangs of remorse? In this point of view, then, death "is gain," for it prevents many crimes and excites to the practice of many virtues.

But though death, in the abstract, may thus be considered as great gain to society, and as useful even to the wicked, yet it is only the true christian who can say, in application to himself, *for me to die is gain*. And for the christian "to die is gain," because,

First : He is thereby delivered from those bodily appetites and desires, which rule in his members, and are, in the present life, great obstacles to the progress of religion. In the state of innocence, every faculty of man was pure and holy. Then was the reign of conscience, when every inferiour principle acted in due subordination to its superiour, and an admirable harmony subsisted between appetite and reason, inclination and duty. A sad reverse has now taken place. Appetite and

passion, combining in a league with sin, have usurped the place of conscience, and make the will captive at their pleasure. The body, instead of encouraging and assisting the soul in the execution of its duty, is a heavy incumbrance in the christian race. The flesh, with its affections and lusts, is enmity against God. Whence come all the evils which prevail in the world? "Come they not hence? Even "of our lusts which war in our members?" And "the works of the flesh are manifest, "which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, "strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, "drunkenness, revellings, and such like."

Nor is the virtue of the christian exposed to danger, merely from those principles of action which either wholly originate in the corrupted and degenerate state of our nature, or which it has a tendency to pervert or misapply; but even the common wants and infirmities of nature, the innocent desires and appetites of the body are a great hinderance to the complete discharge of our duty. Our external senses and organs are incapable of constant employment: They require to be fre-

quently repaired by rest and recreation. The calls of hunger, thirst and sleep frequently interrupt our religious exercises, and break off our intercourse with heaven. The limited nature of our situation, our contracted and short-sighted views of things perpetually expose us to error ; and truth, in opinion, is intimately connected with rectitude in practice. Even the virtues of inferiour obligation and of less importance not unfrequently interfere with those of a sublimer nature and more extensive influence. Our love to God cannot be perfect, when so many other objects, endeared by the name of kindred and friend, claim a place in our esteem. That regard to our own interest and welfare which prudence prescribes, and which religion approves, on many occasions prevents the full exercise of the benevolent affections towards our neighbour.

In the believer, it must be confessed, the lusts of the flesh do not rule with such unbridled sway as in the natural man. The former has passed from death to life, being made partaker of a new and divine nature. Sin has no more dominion over him. He walks not after the flesh, but after the spirit ; by faith and not by sight. But though the spirit

has obtained the ascendancy, the flesh is not completely subdued ; the struggle is not yet over. A continual warfare is carried on between the old and the new man. In vain does the christian expect to rest from his labours, till death has closed the scene. While in the body, he will, still, find some irregular desire to be suppressed, some sinful affection to be mortified, some root of bitterness to be destroyed ; those lusts and passions which he thought were reduced to entire subjection, will revolt afresh, and, in an unguarded hour, humble him by a mortifying defeat. Hence we find good men, who have been attentive to the operations of their minds, lamenting that they make so little progress in holiness, that they frequently feel the discharge of their duty burthensome and disagreeable, that they experience so little fervency and delight in the exercises of religion, that unhallowed thoughts and desires often intrude into their minds when engaged in the immediate service of God, and that when the spirit would ascend to heaven on the wings of devotion, the affections and lusts of the flesh drag it down to earth, and loudly call out for gratification. The psalmist David, and the Apostle Paul,

two of the brightest ornaments of religion, describe their own experience of this internal struggle between faith and sense, in striking and mournful language. “ Mine iniquities,” says the psalmist, “ are gone over mine head ; “ as a heavy burden, they are too heavy for “ me. Innumerable evils have compassed “ me about ; mine iniquities have taken hold “ upon me, so that I am not able to look up ; “ they are more than the hairs of my head ; “ therefore my heart faileth me.”* And still more explicitly the Apostle thus speaks : “ I “ know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwell- “ eth no good thing, for to will is present with “ me, but how to perform that which is good “ I find not. I find a law, that when I would “ do good, evil is present with me. For I “ delight in the law of the Lord after the in- “ ward man ; but I feel another law in my “ members, warring against the law of my “ mind, and bringing me into captivity to the “ law of sin which is in my members. O “ wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver “ me from the body of this death ?”†

* Psalm xxxviii. 4. xl. 12.
23, 24.

† Romans vii. 13, 21, 22,

Death itself shall deliver thee, O christian ! Rejoice, then, at the thoughts of it's approach. The evil passions which now torment you will then cease to possess any force. When you " shuffle off this mortal coil," you bid adieu for ever to frailty and imperfection. The soul, disencumbered from its earthly load, and having " laid aside every weight," not only has a clear perception of its duty, but also runs with cheerfulness the ways of God's commandments. Sin is for ever done away, and virtue holds an universal and perpetual reign. The wintry blasts of death destroy the noxious weeds of vice ; but they nip not the buds of virtue. These, transplanted into a milder region, expand and flourish in eternal spring, continually becoming more beautiful and perfect.

Secondly : For a good man "*to die is gain,*" because, while this important change delivers him from those internal foes which are so often a source of grief, and which make him go heavily, it also places him beyond the reach of external temptations. Many are the allurements which, in the present life, would entice us to transgress the laws of religion. The voice of pleasure, the calls of interest, the

snare of company, the influence of evil example, the suggestions of the tempter, will sometimes lead astray those who are best acquainted with their duty, and most resolute in it's discharge. What watchfulness and care are necessary that we fall not into temptation ! For we “wrestle not only against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” But beyond the grave temptations shall assail us no more. The grand adversary of God and of virtue has no power to hurt in the world of souls. “When death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed,” our victory over all our foes shall be complete. The profits and pleasures of the world can have no influence on our minds, when the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved. The cares and avocations of life can no longer disturb or interrupt those who serve God day and night in his heavenly temple. Evil example cannot seduce those who have God, the source of perfection, to contemplate, and angels as a model of imitation. For every thing that defileth, and whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie, shall be altogether ex-

cluded from the pure abodes of light and virtue.

Thirdly : It is gain for the christian to die, because death removes him from a world of sorrow and imperfection. However desirous we may be of long life, we must acknowledge that but small is the portion of pure and unmixed happiness which we here enjoy. Even the most prosperous have their share of suffering. Solomon, king of Israel, who enjoyed every thing his heart could desire under the sun ; who sought for happiness in power, in knowledge, in pleasure, in fame, and in every way in which men commonly imagine it is to be found, yet declared that all was vanity and vexation of spirit. If such is the state of those whose “ cup runneth over,” what must be the condition of such as are exposed to adversity, and subjected to the various calamities daily occurring in the humbler walks of life ? Poverty and want, sickness and sorrow, anxiety and disappointment, form a bitter draught, and in a great measure justify the declaration of Job, “ that he would not live always.” In the morning of our days, before we have experienced the cares and sorrows of the world, we imagine the prospect before us to be alto-

gether fair and beautiful. We suppose the path of life to be smooth and easy, strewed with roses, where no thorn is found, and filled on every side with sources of enjoyment. But no sooner do we enter on this path than we find how egregiously we were deceived. Cares and toils, in constant succession, cloud our sky. The tender buds of hope are nipped by the killing frost of disappointment. The airy visions of youthful expectation are dissolved by the touch of real life. We find the world stored with fewer enjoyments than we imagined. We see that nothing is to be gained without labour, toil, and unceasing exertion. We behold around us a fleeting and transitory scene. The friends of our youth are removed into the land of forgetfulness, and leave us to prosecute our journey alone. Old age advances, with hasty steps, attended with infirmity and disease, destitute of enjoyment, and leaving us nothing to wish for, but that death would come to conclude our sorrows.

I speak not these things to disgust you at the world. In the world, such as it is, God has placed you, and in his appointment you ought readily to acquiesce. But if, by stating the true estimate of human life, I can reconcile

you to the thoughts of your departure hence, and banish from your minds that fear of death which holds so many in bondage, I shall not disturb your innocent tranquillity, but rather lay the surest foundation of serenity and peace. And what in the present uncertain and vain scene can attach to it any rational being? What can there be formidable in death which is so sovereign a remedy for every disease, so certain a deliverance from every sorrow? In the grave you shall rest from all your labours. How silent, still, and peaceful are the mansions of the dead! the turmoils, cares and pursuits of life are over. The storms of passion disturb not the endless calm which reigns in the tomb. The cares of gain and the projects of ambition interrupt not the slumbers of the lowly bed. No more shall the corroding hand of envy trouble the repose of the inhabitants of the grave. No more shall they feel the pangs of disappointment. No more shall they know the sickness of the heart which arises from hope deferred. In the grave “the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest: There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor, and the servant is free from his master.”

Fourthly : It is gain for the christian to die, because, with respect to those who die in the Lord, not only do “they rest from their labours,” but “their works do also follow them.” Death, while it concludes the sufferings of the just, introduces them to joys of the most pure and exalted nature. What are the joys of heaven, what the happiness of the just in the higher house, eye hath not seen nor ear heard. The world to come is an undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller e’er returned to tell of what he saw; and indeed were a messenger to be sent from these distant regions, to explain to men the nature of that state towards which they are going, it would be very difficult, if not wholly impossible for them, in their present imperfect state, to understand his description of a scene so entirely different from any thing they now know, and so much more exalted. In general, the happiness of heaven consists in the absence of all pain, and the possession of every enjoyment which the nature of the blessed will admit. All tears shall be wiped away from their eyes: Sorrow and sighing shall be for ever fled. There shall be neither death, nor crying, nor trouble, nor any more pain. On the other

hand, the joys of eternity are infinitely various, suited to every character ; and, though undoubtedly very different from any thing we know at present, they are represented in scripture under the notion of those pleasures which we now deem most pure and exquisite. Those who delight in the pursuit of knowledge, and lament that, in consequence of the present imperfection of their faculties and the limited nature of their condition, they see through a glass darkly and know but in part, shall then see face to face and know even as they are known. Those who admire, and love to contemplate, great and exalted characters, shall then see and enjoy God. Those who delight in the exercises of devotion shall be employed day and night in praising and serving God in his heavenly temple. Those who are fond of honour and power shall have their desire fulfilled ; for they shall be made kings and priests unto God. Those who prefer the pleasures of friendship and the endearments of society, shall be admitted into the society of the just made perfect ; a society of peace and harmony, where charity never faileth, where all is love and happiness for ever. Who can think of these things without perceiving how much all

earthly enjoyments fall short in the comparison ?

Finally : It is gain for the christian to die, because death is the means which heaven hath appointed for refining our dust, that it may be restored and revived pure and spiritual, free from every stain and defect. Concerning the soul's immortality unenlightened reason was able to form conjectures which if not wholly satisfactory, were yet sufficient to excite hope; but the body it gave up as for ever lost; it left the material part of our nature in a state of perpetual union with its kindred dust. Christianity has removed the shadows which hung over the region of the grave. It teaches us that the separation between the soul and body, is only temporary. This body of which you are so passionately fond, and the loss of which you so much dread, must indeed see corruption; but it shall not be left for ever in the grave. The hour cometh when the earth and the sea shall give up their dead; when this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible shall put on incorruption. At the general resurrection of the just, those weak, frail and imperfect bodies, which at present are subject to so many wants, infirmities and

diseases, shall arise glorious and perfect, no more liable to death or pain. “It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body,”

I now proceed to apply what has been said to the affecting occasion of our present meeting. Nor can the application appear difficult or unnatural. Amidst the sorrowful reflections which this afflicting dispensation of Providence suggests, it is no small consolation to think that our deceased brother has been an unspeakable gainer by that change, which to us is so distressing. If a mind well grounded and settled in the faith; if an upright, inoffensive and exemplary conduct, becoming a man, a christian, and a minister of Christ; if a kindness of affection, an evenness of temper and a suavity of manners which gained him the sincere attachment of his friends, and blunted the shafts of malice and alleviated the burden of human calamity; if an end awfully impressive, and honourable to himself, to his profession and to religion; if these are proofs that a man “is in Christ Jesus,” we know that

he, whose body lies before us, insensible of pain or pleasure, and about to be deposited in the cold, dark and silent mansion of the grave, now enjoys, in his spiritual part, that blessedness which is the portion of those who die in the Lord. His soul, purified from every stain, and placed beyond the reach of sorrow, has joined the society of the “just made perfect,” partakes of the joys of heaven, and drinks of those rivers of pleasure which flow at the right hand of the throne of God.

They who knew Mr. MALCOMSON intimately through life, will bear testimony to what I have now said :* We who witnessed its clo-

* Mr. MALCOMSON was born in the parish of Castlereagh, in the county of Down, in Ireland: But, like most of the young men in that country of the Presbyterian Communion, who are destined for the Ministry, he received the principal part of his education at the University of Glasgow. Being regularly licensed, and afterwards ordained to the office of the Ministry, by the Presbytery of Belfast, he removed to this country in the beginning of 1794, in consequence of a call from the original Presbyterian church of Williamsburgh. There he continued for nearly ten years, discharging with fidelity and diligence the duties of his pastoral office, much and justly esteemed by the members of his congregation. With his ministerial functions he combined (what should always, if possible, be united in remote country settlements, where a physician seldom is resident) the profession of medicine, in which he possessed no small degree of skill, and

sing scene are able to add an authority still more unexceptionable and impressive. For

“ A death-bed’s a detector of the heart :

“ There tir’d dissimulation drops the mask :

“ There REAL and APPARENT are the same.”

YOUNG.

how much was it to be wished that the infidel and the worldling had been present in the last moments of our departed friend ! That they

which he practised with considerable success. He also contributed largely to the benefit of the district in which he was settled, by promoting the institution of an academy, which he afterwards superintended with credit to himself, and profit to his pupils : And, at a later period, he vindicated with ability and success, both from the pulpit and the press, the cause of genuine and rational religion, in opposition to some misguided men who wished to maintain, that the kingdom of heaven consists not so much in *righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost*, as in enthusiastic raptures, and in violent bodily contorsions and agitations, which they absurdly denominated being *religiously exercised*. In that district there unhappily existed, long before his residence in it, religious and political divisions and prejudices, too deeply rooted and too inveterate to be easily eradicated ; and, though his useful labours, upright conduct, and very obliging and agreeable manners, gained him the sincere and universal attachment of his own congregation, and of all men who had discernment to appreciate, and liberality to acknowledge merit, he found that the most inoffensive conduct will not always secure from the tongue of the slanderer, those whom he has resolved to persecute ; and he experienced, on various oc-

who foolishly barter an eternity of bliss for an hour of transitory enjoyment, had heard his sentiments on the vanity of all sublunary things ! That they who are carried down the stream of pleasure, unmoved by the sorrows, and insensible even to the joys of others, had witnessed the heart-rending but instructive

casions, the unhappiness of living in a society where, though we are for peace, others are obstinately bent on war. With a view to escape the evils of this state of society, in hope of providing more amply for the education and support of a numerous and increasing family, and induced, by the opinion of respectable friends, that his labours as an instructor of youth, and a minister of religion, would here meet with encouragement and success, he removed to Charleston in the beginning of this year. Here his expectations were more than realized. Liberal and discerning men did justice to respectable talents, to attainments far above mediocrity, to upright and exemplary conduct, to agreeable manners, and to an unexampled suavity and placidness of disposition which is justly deemed one of the best proofs of a christian temper. He had obtained a respectable and numerous academy ; daily accessions were making to a congregation already considerable for numbers, and justly and sincerely attached to their pastor, and he had the fairest prospects of being highly useful and respected in the community, and of making a handsome provision for his family. When, alas ! to the inexpressible grief of his family and friends, and to the great loss of society, in the prime of life, in the full vigour of his faculties, in the 36th year of his age, he is removed from us to occupy a more exalted station in another region of God's infinite dominions.

scene, when, finding his end approaching, he called his family and friends around him, comforted his afflicted consort, exhorting her to trust in the living God who had all along befriended them, and who would still prove her protector and guardian ; when he took his infant child in his arms, blessed her, and commended her to the providential care of the Almighty ; when he charged such of his offspring as had understanding sufficient to comprehend his meaning, to persevere in the virtuous course in which they had been initiated, and diligently serve Him whom their father had served ; when he expressed to his weeping friends and some of the affectionate attendants on his ministry who were present, his ardent wishes for the success of the gospel, and for the interests of religion and virtue, declared his unfeigned assent to the truths of christianity, devoutly thanked God for the comforts and hopes of religion, and desired his friends to join in the performance of that divine exercise of praise, which he was soon to enjoy in perfection in the mansions above.* Such, O

* *The psalm which he desired to be sung on this occasion was the cXLVth of the collection of psalms and hymns now*

christians ! were the triumphs of religion in the dark and evil day ! Here we saw “ with “ what fortitude a christian could die.” Here was a lecture more effectual than volumes, to

used in the Presbyterian congregations in this city and neighbourhood ; and is as follows :

I’LL praise my Maker with my breath,
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers :
My days of praise shall ne’er be past,
While life and thought and being last,
Or immortality endures.

Happy the man whose hopes rely
On Israel’s God : He made the sky,
And earth and seas with all their train :
His truth for ever stands secure ;
He saves th’ opprest, He feeds the poor,
And none shall find His promise vain.

The Lord hath eyes to give the blind ;
The Lord supports the sinking mind ;
He sends the lab’ring conscience peace ;
He helps the stranger in distress,
The widow and the fatherless,
And grants the pris’ner sweet release.

He loves his saints, he knows them well,
His love their joyful lips shall tell ;
Thy God, O Sion ! ever reigns :
Let every tongue, let every age
In this exalted work engage ;
Praise him in everlasting strains.

dispel the visionary charms of pleasure, to dim the splendour of the miser's gold, to put vice to confusion and give peace to virtue, to make the believer adore and the infidel tremble.

But, while the departure of our deceased brother was thus happy and enviable ; though with regard to himself, it was "far better to depart and to be with Christ," yet the loss of an useful and diligent instructor of youth, a faithful and able minister of religion, a kind husband and affectionate parent, cannot be thought of without mourning, cannot be felt without the deepest and most poignant sorrow. We wish not to presage ill to the country or to the church of God. It is to be hoped that there are yet left many good men, whose prayers and whose alms ascend in memorial before God, and help to shield us from the divine vengeance so justly due to our manifold sins, and to restore the divine favour to our guilty land. It is to be hoped that he, with whom is the residue of

I'll praise my Maker with my breath ;
 And when my voice is lost in death,
 Praise shall employ my nobler pow'rs :
 My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
 While life and thought and being last,
 Or immortality endures.

the spirit, will again send forth into his vineyard able and faithful labourers to feed his people with knowledge and understanding. But, my brethren, while our land mourns under the sad effects of the divine displeasure ; when wasting pestilence depopulates our cities ; when the swelling floods, impelled by the breath of heaven, threaten our habitations and our lives with destruction ; when the tempestuous winds, sweeping our fields, blast the hopes of the husbandman,* the most inconsi-

* On the 8th of September, 1804, the states of South-Carolina and Georgia were visited with a hurricane more violent in itself than had been known for half a century, and more destructive in its consequences than any which had occurred since the first settlement of the country by Europeans. The gulf stream being opposed in its course by a violent north-east wind, and thrown back upon the coast, raised the tide many feet, (at Savannah it was said to be ten, but at Charleston it did not appear to be more than five or six) above the ordinary height at high water. All the wharves in Charleston were overflowed, and greatly injured by the violence of the waves, and the beating of vessels against their sides. Many cellars and stores were filled with water, and property was damaged to a considerable amount. Many vessels lying at the wharves were sunk or dashed in pieces ; others were forced from their anchorage and driven on shore : and scarcely one escaped without some material injury.—The coast was covered with fragments of the wrecks of vessels which had foundered in the gale at sea. Some were dri-

derate are called to solemn reflection. And when, in this moment of reflection, we consider the many heinous and presumptive sins of this nation ; when we observe the indocili-

ven ashore and lost, though, in some cases, their crews and part of their cargoes were saved. The rice swamps and low lands within reach of the tide, were generally overflowed, by which the crops of rice and provisions were greatly injured, and in many places totally destroyed and swept away by the reflux water. The fields of cotton, particularly along the sea-shore, which previously promised an abundant crop, were blasted and nearly destroyed by the violence of the wind and the spray of the sea. The leaves of the trees were blighted, and it was observed that in a few weeks a new spring seemed to commence, the foliage was renewed, and many of the fruit trees were again covered with blossoms and fruit.

In Georgia many negroes and others were drowned in consequence of the low islands along the coast being overflowed to a considerable depth. Only one life was lost in Charleston : but, during the gale, the most serious apprehensions were entertained for the safety of many hundreds of its inhabitants, who are accustomed, during the warm months, to retire, for the sake of the coolness and salubrity of the air, to Sullivan's-Island, situated at the mouth of the bay or harbour. This island, which is nothing but a sand-bank, was completely covered with the waters of the sea, in some places five or six feet deep ; upwards of twenty houses were blown down by the winds, or washed away by the waves : The inhabitants (with the exception of one negro) were saved by retreating to the houses placed on the most elevated ground ; but, had the gale continued a few hours longer, and raised the waters a foot or two higher, it was feared that ev-

ty, the immorality, and the unpromising character of the young and rising generation ; when we perceive, on the one hand, the unceasing efforts of infidelity and profaneness to rob us of that which is our guide in life, our comfort in affliction, and our hope in death, and, on the other, the lukewarmness and indifference of those who still retain the form of godliness, no serious and good man can help being affected with apprehension and regret to hear of the sudden and frequent removal of so many useful characters and faithful ministers of religion. “ Help, Lord ! for the godly man ceaseth, for the faithful fail from among the children of men ! ”

To us, my brethren of the clergy ! this dispensation of Providence speaks in a still louder and more alarming tone. It is one of ourselves, who was employed with us in beseeching sinners to be reconciled unto God, in holding forth the terrours of the Lord, and in

every house on the island must have been swept away, and every soul have perished.

During the months of July, August and September, of the same year, the disease called the yellow-fever, which for 12 years past has, with two exceptions, paid an annual visit to Charleston, was more than usually fatal to strangers, and carried off many useful and valuable citizens.

displaying the blessedness and rewards of a virtuous course, who has fallen by our side. "The prophets do not live for ever," more than others. Let none of us, therefore, indulge the mistaken idea that we have no interest in those solemn and awful truths which we are commissioned to declare to others. Let us study to be prepared, as our departed brother, to display that patience under affliction, and that fortitude in the hour of death which we so frequently inculcate on others. Let us show that religion is not with us a mere speculative theory ; but a practical system which has impressed our own heart, and actuates our own conduct. Let us not attempt to bind on others heavy burdens which we will not touch with one of our fingers.

Four times, within a few short months, has the shaft of this "insatiate archer been discharged ; and four times has a minister of God fallen a victim to its irresistible force.*

* The Reverend Thomas Frost, and the Reverend Thomas H. Spierin, of the Episcopalian Church, the Reverend ——— Waters of the Methodist persuasion, and the Reverend James Malcomson, of the Presbyterian Church, all died within a few months of each other : And within less than three years preceding, the Episcopalian Church were also deprived of the Right Reverend Bishop Smith, the Reverend Doctor Henry Purcell, and the Reverend Peter Parker.

It is again pointed : to whose breast is known only to him for whose permission he delays to strike. Let us set our houses in order. Let us work the work of him who sent us. Let us be diligent in season and out of season, that, by our labours in word and doctrine, we may save our own souls, and the souls of them who hear us.

Believing also, that there is a superintending Providence, who governs the world by just and equal laws, and who, by every affliction, intends to punish or to try us, it behoves us to consider whether there may not be found in ourselves sufficient reason why the “Lord’s anger burns so fierce against us,” Have we not, one and all of us, been remiss in the discharge of our duty ? Have we not sought our own glory and interests, rather than the glory of God and the interest of religion ? Have not envyings and jealousies and divisions arisen among us to the injury of religion and the scandal of good and moderate men ? Let us be induced by the affecting and humiliating example before us to set about a reformation of these evils. Let us show that we are brethren not in name, but in deed and in truth. Let us reflect that we are all servants of the same

master. Let us no longer severally say, "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas:" are we not all of Christ? Let us, therefore, as becometh those who are his followers, co-operate harmoniously in spreading the Redeemer's kingdom through the earth, in counteracting the fatal effects of that disorder which sin has introduced into the moral system, in striving to make men wise, virtuous and happy.

With you, my brethern of the infant but flourishing congregation over which our deceased brother presided! I condole, on account of the severe blow which your society has sustained by the loss of your beloved and respected pastor. For a short time only have you enjoyed the benefit of his instructions and labours. But, short as it has been, it will leave lasting memorials behind it: your conscience will bear witness that, during this time he has addressed to you many arguments in behalf of a religious and virtuous life, that he has given you many earnest invitations to repentance and many solemn warnings to flee from the wrath to come, which, if neglected and unimproved, will leave you wholly without excuse in the day of the Lord. Let the

melancholy reflection that you will see his face and hear his voice no more, quicken your recollection, and incline you more readily to comply with the advices which he gave you while he was yet with you. Let your respect for the memory of the deceased induce you to regard the dying injunction which he delivered to some of you. Though the shepherd has been smitten, let not the sheep be scattered abroad. Abate not in your zeal for the glory of God, and the success of the Redeemer's kingdom; forsake not the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of too many among us is. And beseech the great Shepherd to send you another pastor after his own heart, who will declare unto you the word of life, and who will build you up in faith, in charity and in good works.

But who shall describe the situation of the afflicted widow and her four helpless orphans? Who shall undertake to administer consolation to them? If, to a good man, tried and approved of God, and duly prepared for a future state, there can be a bitter pang in death, it is this, to leave behind him an unprotected widow, and helpless orphans, exposed to the storms and tempests of this rude and boisterous

world, having no anxious father to watch over their early years, to instil into them the principles of piety and virtue, and to protect the tender buds from the noxious blasts of vice. But this is a wound too tender now to be probed. Over this scene my feelings compel me to draw a veil. Let us commend them to the almighty protection of our compassionate High-Priest, who has a fellow-feeling with all our infirmities ; who, in all our afflictions, is afflicted ; who knoweth our frame and remembereth that we are dust ; who is the father of the fatherless, the judge of the widow, the stranger's shield and the orphan's stay ; who hath expressly promised, *leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them ; and let thy widows trust in me.* And under what more infallible and certain protection can we place them than under the protection of the everlasting God, who fainteth not, neither is weary, who giveth power to the faint, and to them who have no might increaseth strength.

While we yet stand in the presence of God, with this affecting spectacle before our eyes, and surrounded with the numerous mansions of the dead, let me call upon all who hear me, whatever may be their interest in this dispen-

sation of Providence, to attend to, and to improve the important lessons so forcibly taught by the present scene. See here, my brethren, a faithful representation of the vanity of all earthly pursuits, of all human glory ! Youth, health, beauty, fortune, talents, honours, serve for a short time to distinguish one worm of the earth from another. The grave opens and reduces all to a perfect equality. Look into the house appointed for all living : What a sad spectacle do we there behold ! Ye fathers and mothers of families ! who are still so wedded to the world, whose affections, with a sinful excess are placed on the creature more than on the Creator, see here the ghastly remains of that amiable and beloved daughter, once so fair and so gay, whose memory still wrings your heart and moistens your eyes—of that promising boy who was the idol of your soul and the hope of your declining years, but who was stopt short in the midst of his career, and cut off in the flower of his age ! Disconsolate husband ! Behold the mangled form of that youthful spouse to whose accents of affection you surrendered the soul, on whose beautiful face you gazed with rapture. Afflicted widow ! see here the husband of your youth,

whose unstrung arm can no longer yield you protection, whose dull cold ear cannot listen to your soothing strains, whose breast, once kindled with the purest fire and beating with the best affections, is now mingled with the clods of the valley. “How vain are all things
“here below !” How uncertain and transitory our dearest possessions, and our purest joys ! How careful should we be to place our affections on the “Friend that sticketh closer than
“a brother,” and who will not, like earthly friends, die and leave us.

Hither let the men of the world also repair, and derive instruction from this scene. What desolation do you here behold ! What profound silence reigns among the inhabitants of the tomb ! But this silence is instructive ; it is eloquent. Hear you not a voice issuing from yonder grave and saying, *number your days, and apply your hearts unto wisdom.*

Listen ye votaries of ambition ! to what is addressed to you by one of the occupants of that church-yard ! “I have enjoyed before
“you that place of preferment which you
“now seek. I have been surrounded with
“that splendour which now dazzles your sight.
“I made a figure in the world. My titles,

“ my wealth, my dignity, my credit, were
“ spoken of with admiration and applause.
“ But where did all terminate ? In the grave.
“ And where shall it terminate also with re-
“ gard to you ? In the grave !”

Listen, ye covetous ! to what another of
these dead seems to utter : “ I was tormented
“ with the same insatiable desire of heaping
“ up wealth that now occupies your breast. I
“ became fat on the substance of the widow
“ and the orphan. I got to myself large pos-
“ sessions. But of all these what did I bring
“ with me into this dark abode ? Nothing but
“ a winding-sheet and a coffin. And what
“ more will you carry away of the treasures
“ which you may amass ?”

Listen, ye sons of pleasure ! to the voice
from the tomb : “ I, too, lived voluptuously.
“ I withheld not my heart from any joy.
“ Pleasure I tried in all its forms. But now
“ the voice of musick is low : My pomp is
“ brought down to the grave, and the noise
“ of my viols : The worm is spread under
“ me, and the worms cover me. What you
“ are, I have been ; and what I now am, you
“ will soon be.”

May the salutary impressions which have this day been made upon our minds, abide with us, and influence our conduct during the whole of our remaining abode on earth !

AMEN !

SERMON XIV.

Preached in the Presbyterian church at Charleston, on St. John the Evangelist's day, before the Grand Lodge of Ancient York-Masons.

JOHN, CHAP. 15, VER. 12.

“This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.”

THE *royal law* of love, which forms the basis of the christian character, comprehends two great branches, love to God, and love to man. *On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.* The obligation of the former is so evident and powerful, that we immediately conclude him to be altogether destitute of understanding and feeling, whose heart is not warmed with gratitude, and does not glow with love to the almighty Creator and generous Benefactor of mankind. His mind resembles the barren desert where no fair flower has ever opened its blossoms to the sun's

enlivening rays. This, therefore, *is the first and great commandment* of our nature. *But the second is like unto it*, and is of no less indispensable obligation ; being not only deducible from the love of God, but also impressed upon our minds by an inward feeling which teaches us to look with an eye of benevolence on the whole creation of God, but especially on those whom he has beautified with his image, and made partakers of the same nature with ourselves.

But though the love of our neighbour is part of the system of nature, and has entered into every code of laws which has been published to the world, it shines forth with resplendent lustre in the gospel alone. It is there revealed with so much greater clearness than it had been in former times ; it is there accompanied with such new and powerful motives, that it is justly styled a *new* commandment, as if it had been unknown before, or were peculiar to the religion of Jesus. I have found no passage of sacred writ wherein the precept is more clearly expressed than in the words of the text : and there is none which ought to make a deeper impression on the mind, if we duly consider the affecting situation in which it was deliver-

ed, or the generous motive employed to enforce it's observance.

Jesus and his small society of friends were now assembled in expectation of that fatal event which was to *smite the shepherd, and to scatter the sheep*. For the last time, he was now to address them : His instructions would, therefore, be such as he deemed most important and useful ; and his hearers would listen to them with that attention, and obey them with that alacrity, which are due to the discourse and advice of a dying man. In this interesting situation, what language did he hold to his afflicted followers ? “ *This is my* “ *commandment,*” said he, “ *my peculiar* “ *commandment, about the observance of* “ *which I am most anxious : my last and* “ *dying commandment, which therefore ought* “ *to sink deepest into your hearts : my most* “ *important commandment, which will be* “ *most useful to you when, by my departure,* “ *you are left as* *sheep without a shepherd in* “ *the midst of wolves*—THAT YE LOVE ONE “ ANOTHER. This is the request of one who “ loves you, and who is now about to give the “ most convincing proof of his affection, even “ to lay down his life for you. I cannot sup-

“ pose you so ungrateful as to disregard my
“ commandment, or so insensible to every
“ generous sentiment as to feel no emotion of
“ love and regard for him whose life has been
“ dedicated to your service, and the good of
“ mankind. But all the return I require for
“ this kindness, is, *that ye love one another*.
“ Let the regard which you owe to me be
“ transferred to your brethren ; and whatever
“ affection and kindness you show unto them,
“ I will consider as done unto myself.”

And is it possible, O generous and disinterested Saviour ! that thy commandments are still disregarded by those who bear thy name, and thy blessed example productive of so little effect ? Is it possible, while the wild beasts of the desert delight to associate with those of their kind, while the monsters of prey withhold their ravening jaws from their own species, that man should become the enemy of man, should burn with resentment, malice and revenge against his brother, and should go forth in hostile array to exterminate his race ? Yes truly so it is. Though nature teaches, and the gospel commands us to *love one another*, how often do we see this noble and expanding principle confined and fettered by the narrow

and contracted one of *self-love*. Even where men break not out into open violence and discord, how little brotherly love or sincere goodwill actuates their conduct ! What is modern politeness, but selfishness in disguise ? What is modern honour, but a refined species of revenge ? What avail those phrases of compliment which custom has sanctioned, but to cloak the inward malevolence, or at least indifference of the heart ?

In such a situation of things, when there is so little *love without dissimulation*, it is not an unnecessary, however common, attempt to *illustrate the nature, and enforce the cultivation* of this divine principle.

I. The love of our neighbour is that principle of our nature which leads us to wish well to all mankind, and to do good to as many as are within our reach. It is, therefore, an inward feeling, and not an outward act ; a disposition of soul, and not a qualification of conduct. It is not, however, an useless and inactive principle ; on the contrary, it is the foundation of a virtuous character, and is, in truth, *the fulfilling of the law*. For where it exists in full force, it secures a complete discharge of all the social duties. To this prin-

ciple, however diversified by circumstances and situation, every species of active virtue may be traced. Where it meets with suffering and distress, it shines forth in the exercise of compassion. Where it meets with poverty and want, it appears in works of charity and mercy. When it is called to judge of the actions of others, it decides with candour and impartiality. In cases of insult and injury, love becomes meekness, and leads to the forgiveness of wrongs. Where discord and divisions prevail, love cultivates a quiet and peaceable behaviour. When our friends are interested, it performs, with alacrity, the kind offices of friendship. When our country is in danger, it shines forth under the name of patriotism and publick spirit. To superiours, it shows respect ; to equals, kindness and affection ; to inferiours, gentleness and condescension.

In like manner, it is an effectual barrier against the commission of sin. If we sincerely love one another, we can be guilty of no manner of injustice, for *love worketh no ill to his neighbour*. In that breast where dwells brotherly love, envy can find no place, for *charity envieth not*. Love is an enemy to all

pride and vain-glory, for *charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, and doth not behave itself unseemly.* It stops the mouth of the censorious, for *love thinketh no evil and covereth all sins.* It destroys every spark of covetousness, for *love seeketh not her own.* In short *he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.* For this, *Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

Hitherto we have spoken only of the principle itself and the mode of its operation; let us now inquire into its object. I am to love my neighbour; but who is my neighbour? This question was formerly proposed to our Lord, by one who imagined that no body was his neighbour but one of the same faith and country with himself. Our Lord's reply, which is contained in one of the most beautiful and affecting histories recorded in any language, plainly shows the fallacy of this idea, gives energy to the voice of nature which vicious customs and prejudices had so long silenced, and teaches us that our love ought not to be

confined to our friends and fellow-citizens, from whom we may expect some return, but should embrace, within its ample range, the whole human race, however diversified by nation or colour, government or religion, party or sect. The odious distinctions of nations, countries and religions are abolished by the universal religion of christianity. Jew and Gentile, Greek and Barbarian, Roman and Scythian, bond and free, are all one in Christ Jesus. According to the doctrines of his religion, all men are brethern and friends. Even our enemies are not the proper objects of our hatred; as men and as christians we ought to love them. For all who bear the name of Christ have the same common faith, are animated by the same spirit, supported by the same hope, heirs of the same promises, fellow-citizens of the same country, and travellers in the same journey which, they expect, will at last conduct them to the same blessed abodes where no discord enters. The liberal and comprehensive system of the gospel, thus plainly inculcates the doctrine of *universal love to mankind*.

The last question necessary to be solved on this subject, is, what *degree* of love ought we

to have for our neighbours? The sacred rule is, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy-self*; which, I suppose, is of the same import with this other commandment, *Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also unto them*. Let us, in imagination, for a moment divest ourselves of our own persons, lay our self-love and prejudices aside, place ourselves in the situation, and assume the person and character of our neighbour, and whatever love we would in that case show to ourselves, such love ought we in all cases to have for one another.

II. I now proceed to recommend the cultivation of this divine principle. Here I purposely avoid speaking of the mutual wants and dependence of men, and of the changeable and uncertain nature of human affairs. Such arguments can have no weight but with the selfish and interested; and to me it appears highly improbable that, by strengthening your love for yourselves, I shall encourage the love of your neighbour. I wish, therefore, that you would love one another from more liberal and generous motives; because it is supported by such bright examples; because it is the law both of your nature, and of your

religion ; because it contributes so much to the happiness of society, and to the perfection of the human character.

To *love one another* is to resemble God, whose image it is our greatest excellence, and should be our highest ambition to attain. *God is love ; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.* Such a man possesses within his breast a spark of that celestial flame which exists in the divine nature. He thereby indicates that he is a child of God, and imitates his merciful Father in heaven. On the contrary, *he who loveth not, knoweth not God, neither dwelleth the love of God in him ; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen ?* Darkness is not more opposite to light, nor deformity to beauty, than cruelty, malevolence and oppression to the character of the Supreme Being. And can we imitate a more perfect pattern than God, who is the source of all perfection ? can any thing be more noble, or more worthy of our attention, than that which tends to assimilate us to him, who is the origin of every thing that is good, amiable and excellent in human nature ? *Be ye, therefore, followers of God, and walk in love.*

But the love of our neighbour is recommended by another example, better adapted to our imitation, because it was exhibited in human form, by one like ourselves, even Jesus our master, *who left us an example that we should follow his steps.* The superiority of example to precept has been felt and acknowledged in every age. While the cold maxims of abstract reasoning address only the *understanding*, the history of a good and virtuous character forms a living picture of the beauty of holiness, and fails not to interest the *heart*. In vain would we look for a more perfect example of every virtue, but especially of love to man, than the character of Jesus presents. It was his love and compassion for the human race, which prompted him to leave the celestial mansions, and to sojourn upon earth. The same principle actuated every part of his conduct; for he went about continually doing good. Nothing could extinguish that divine flame which glowed in his breast. Though exposed to the most shocking ingratitude, and to every species of insult and injury, yet did his love to man continue unabated. At last, to crown all his generous exertions for the good of mankind, he died in their stead : *And greater love*

hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. When his followers forsook him and fled ; when *malice* was directing all her shafts against him ; when *cruelty* assailed him in the most terrible forms ; when *justice* refused to listen to his cry ; when *pity* seemed to have fled from the society of men, even then his countenance beamed with love and compassion to the human race ; even then *meekness* and *patience*, the constant companions of his sorrows, did not desert him, but dictated his last words, which breathed no spirit of malevolence, which contained no harsh threatening, which indicated no purpose of revenge, but were a prayer for his enemies and persecutors : *Father ! forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

My brethren, *to love one another* is the law of your *nature*. Man cannot exist but in society ; and society cannot exist without *love*. Those who assert that men are led to associate with one another from a principle of *fear* and not of *love*, appear to overlook this plain truth, that by coming together we would expose ourselves to danger ; and certainly we will never associate with those of whom we are afraid. That there is a benevolent principle

in the heart of man, is obvious from an appeal to fact. All the sophistry in the world can never destroy the evidence of conscious feeling. He who says that I love my neighbour from the pleasure of doing so, and from the prospect of return, might as well tell me that I eat and drink, not to preserve my own life, but for the sake of others, who will be the ultimate gainers. On some occasions, it must be confessed, if we examine the state of our hearts, and our dispositions towards those with whom we associate, the existence of this principle is not so easily discovered. Where our own interest is nearly concerned, self-love, with her black train of envyings, jealousies, and rivalships, too often prevails over brotherly affection. But remove the picture to a proper distance, and then self-love, retiring to the back ground, leaves the principal place in the piece to benevolence. Who ever read the history of a generous and benevolent action, without approbation? Who ever heard of a hero nobly sacrificing his life for his friends and his country, and did not envy his happiness and glory? Who ever traced the steps of a Howard or a Hanway, whose heads were constantly devising, and whose hearts were in-

cessantly prompting them to execute schemes for the good of mankind, and did not applaud their exertions in the cause of human nature, did not glow with admiration of their virtue, did not enter into their feelings, and suppose himself acting with them the generous and benevolent part? The genuine and unbiassed language of nature will be found to differ in nothing from the words of our Saviour: *This is my commandment, THAT YE LOVE ONE ANOTHER.* To cultivate this principle, therefore, we have no need to force our inclinations, but only to give them free scope. Benevolence is a native plant of the human mind; and, if the weeds of wicked and selfish passions are removed, it will infallibly spring up and flourish.

My brethren, *to love one another* is the law of your religion. Every system, whether of government or religion, has some prevailing principle which pervades the whole, and gives life and animation to all its parts. Thus *fear* has been said to be the principle of despotism, *honour* of monarchy, and *virtue* (or *publick spirit*) of a republick. The slightest attention to the christian system must convince us that it's ruling principle is *love*. From love the

whole scheme originated ; the manner of it's accomplishment displays the most wonderful and unequalled love ; the state of happiness to which it leads, is described as a state of perfect harmony and love : love is commanded as the ruling principle, and represented as the characteristick feature of all it's disciples. To love one another, to live at peace with all men, to be daily employed in acts of goodness, to be slow to wrath, to forgive the wrongs of the injurious, to cultivate meekness, gentleness and kindness, are the constant precepts of that charitable religion which proceeded from the God of love, and was proclaimed by the Saviour of men : That religion whose benign influences have dispelled the ignorance and barbarity which had hitherto overspread the greatest part of the earth, enlightened and civilized the human mind, softened and refined the manners of society, restrained the ravages and cruelties of war, promoted peace on earth and good will among men, mitigated the severity of punishment, and taught us to consider all men as the children of one universal parent, who is good unto all, and whose tender mercies are over all his works.

Finally, we ought to love one another, if we consider how much this principle contributes to the happiness of society and the perfection of human nature. It is not the man of great talents, but the man of a good heart, who is most useful to his fellow-creatures. To do acts of publick and extensive utility, to scatter plenty over a land, to raise a fallen or support a sinking state, are indeed noble exertions, and call forth the admiration and gratitude of mankind. But they are the lot of only a few men in an age or nation. Whereas the situation of no man prevents him from cultivating a benevolent heart : there is not a day nor hour of our lives wherein we may not wish well and do good to our neighbour. Indeed, did this principle universally prevail, the labours of the legislator, of the hero and of the patriot would be, in a great measure, unnecessary. Were men actuated by true brotherly love, they would respect the rights of their neighbour, without the injunctions of law, or the fear of punishment. Wars and rumours of war would be heard no more ; the animosities, discords and debates which agitate private society, would instantly give place to peace and mutual good-will. Then, and not till then, may

we expect the fulfilment of those happy predictions that *the wolf and the lamb shall lie down together, and a little child shall lead them. Then the wilderness and the solitary place would be glad, the desert would rejoice and blossom as the rose. Then they would not hurt nor destroy in all the holy mountain of the Lord.* And can we conceive greater perfection in human nature? *Behold how pleasant and how comely it is for brethren to dwell together in unity ! It is as the dew of Hermon, as the dew that descended on the mountains of Zion.* Indeed we cannot form a more exalted idea of the happiness of the higher mansions, where every thing, like the calm and untroubled ocean, reflects the serenity of God's countenance ; where the angers, quarrels, dissensions and storms which render this sea of life so troublesome and tempestuous, are all blown over, and where the reign of universal peace, harmony and love has begun, never to terminate.

Thus, my brethren, I have endeavoured shortly to illustrate and recommend the love of your neighbour, on a day sacred to the memory of that beloved disciple, whose writings breathe so much of that spirit of love which

his intimacy and friendship with his master must have inspired; a day rendered still more memorable by being the anniversary of a society whose fundamental principle is *brotherly love*, shining forth in the fair fruits of peace and harmony, charity and good works—a society the most liberal in its plan, the most benevolent in its intention, and the most inoffensive in its conduct, that ever was instituted in the world—a society which encourages and observes the most profound respect for the Supreme Being, the great architect of nature—a society which embraces the whole human race, considers all mankind as one blessed family of brethren, and unites men of all ranks and conditions, of all parties and sects, of all nations and religions—a society which inculcates rectitude and moderation of conduct by the most significant emblems—a society from whose meetings all strife and vain argument, all riot and intemperance are, by the laws of its institution, carefully excluded—a society whose ears have been ever open to the cry of the indigent and needy—a society which, if it did not stand secure in its own intrinsic excellence, might well claim respect from its high antiquity and the nume-

rous catalogue of great and shining names of which it can boast—a society which has not excited nor can excite the indignation of any but the suspicious despot, or the blood-thirsty inquisitor.

The great objection which has been so often made to our institution, is the secrecy of our proceedings ; that we have laws which are not to be divulged, and meetings removed from the eye of the inquisitive. Such an objection may excite fear in the breast of the tyrant, whose throne totters under him, and whose feeble arm is unable to wield the sceptre which he holds ; but scarcely deserves attention in a land of freedom where no man has an inquisitorial power over the private opinions and conduct of another. By their actions all men ought to be judged ; and to these, the members of this society need not be afraid to appeal. For it has been proved by universal experience, that our meetings have never once been prostituted to purposes hurtful to society ; and that, while every other human institution has degenerated, this alone has preserved its original purity and exemption from everything not calculated for the good of mankind. Societies instituted for the laudable purpose of

promoting knowledge and literature, forsaking the peaceful walks of science, have become the tools of a party, and given the sanction of their authority to the varying doctrines of the day. Even religion itself has been made the engine of despotism, or has yielded to the fury of popular commotion : and the pulpit has at one time resounded with the maxims of non-resistance, and at another with incentives to insurrection. But *free masonry* has ever kept itself *pure from the blood of all men*. In no age nor nation have the assemblies of the Brotherhood become the seats of sedition, or the scenes of intrigue. In their meetings no dark cabals are formed against the constituted authorities ; no secret shaft is aimed at the reputation of the innocent ; no foul crime is committed which shuns the examination of the light. Like every other society, we have secrets and signs of distinction, which, upon application, may be made known to the duly qualified ; but these regard only ourselves. As far as the world is concerned, our grand secret is—LOVE : Love, the cement of society and the balm of life ; Love, that adamant chain which reaches from heaven to earth, and binds the universe together ;—

Love, eternal as God himself, without beginning and without end. In short, our fundamental principles differ in nothing from those of our holy religion. So much, indeed, are they the same, that he who is a good *free mason* will not be a bad *christian*.

After bestowing this just tribute of praise upon what I conceive to be the best of all human institutions, it is natural for me to exhort such of the brethren as are present, to walk worthy of their profession. *Let not your good be evil spoken of ;* but be an example to others, and shew to the world, by your conduct, that you belong to a society which is innocent and virtuous—*Hereby shall all men know that ye are FREE MASONS, if ye love one another.* This is a surer test of your initiation into the sublime mysteries of your art, than any sign or secret whatever. *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away far from you : and be ye kindly affectioned one towards another, in brotherly love preferring one another.*

Above all, let your meetings be conducted with that harmony, peace and good order, which brotherly love ought to produce, without which society is not worth enjoying, and with-

out which it were *better to dwell in the wilderness, or on the house top.* No strife, nor idle debate ought ever to be heard among you. You do not assemble to display your talents, or, in dire conflict, to brandish the weapons of political disputation, but as brethren and friends, to enjoy social conversation, and to promote one another's happiness.

Permit me to conclude this discourse with observing, to the honour of your institution, that on this grand festival you piously *join trembling with your mirth*; that, within these sacred walls, dedicated to Almighty God, you engage in his service, and acknowledge your dependence on him, before you proceed to partake of his bounty. Let the same principle of religion actuate the whole of your proceedings on this day, and teach you the wisdom of temperance, sobriety and moderation. Under these limitations, I know no principle in the order to which you belong, nor in the religion which you profess, prohibiting an indulgence in the innocent and lawful enjoyments of life. To every one who acts up to the true principles of Free Masonry, I may address myself in the words of the preacher, *Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a*

merry heart ; for God accepteth thy works.
And, with regard to every one of us, may he so accept our *work of faith*, and *labour of love*, that, when this earthly tabernacle is dissolved, we may find a place in that *eternal house*, which the great Architect of Nature has framed, and into which every true FREE MASON, and every *good and virtuous man* will be admitted, with this joyful welcome, *Well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

Now to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, be praise, honour, and glory, for ever and ever. AMEN !

AN ORATION,

*Delivered at the Orphan-House in Charleston, on
the sixth anniversary of the institution, 1795.*

FELLOW-CITIZENS,

THE honour of being called to address you, on this occasion, is somewhat qualified by the consideration, that the subject to which our thoughts are naturally directed, has been so often discussed, that no new argument can be advanced to gratify the ear of curiosity, and no additional lustre given to those which are already known, to render them more acceptable to hearers of a refined taste. But, disadvantageous as this may be to the speaker, it affords no sufficient reason why we should discontinue the celebration of this anniversary. In the course of a year, many things occur, to wear away the impressions which former discourses may have produced. The zeal

which you felt at the commencement of the institution will gradually cool, unless renewed and revived by frequently presenting to your view the objects by which it was at first excited. It is a circumstance, too, highly encouraging, that I am not sent to you with heavy tidings, or desired to make unwelcome demands upon your charity ; but rather to thank you for your former liberality, to congratulate you on the success with which your exertions have been attended, and to point out this institution as an object of the first importance to the community, and as highly deserving of your future patronage.

Had I no other purpose in view but to interest your affections in behalf of this establishment, I need go no farther than the objects before you. You now behold one of the most pleasing and affecting sights which can be exhibited to the benevolent eye ; the most magnificent edifice of the kind of which the new world can boast, erected on a spot formerly barren and unprofitable, to shelter and protect those tender plants whom misfortune and adversity had left exposed to every rude and noxious blast—more than one hundred of your fellow-creatures, lately subject to pover-

ty and want, and ready to fall victims to vice and ruin, happily rescued by your generous interposition, and decently clothed, supported and educated by your bounty. “ Deprived
“ of every parental aid, you became their
“ guardians ; destitute of any abode, you provided for them a habitation ; hungry and
“ thirsty, you fed them and gave them drink ;
“ exposed continually to the wiles of the destroyer, you snatched them, with an angel’s
“ hand, from destruction ; in danger of every
“ evil to which idleness and ignorance could
“ render them liable, you employed and instructed them.” If the recollection of beneficent actions, and the consciousness of good intentions, though defeated by the perverseness of men, or by those untoward accidents to which all human schemes are liable, are a source of pure and exquisite enjoyment ; your satisfaction must be greatly increased, when you behold your intentions carried into execution, and your labours crowned with complete success. But how must the imagination expand with hope, and the heart dilate with joy, when you look forward and behold those whom you now protect, entering into life ; acting for themselves ; filling useful and hon-

ourable stations in society ; adorning and improving their country by their ingenuity and industry, or defending it by their valour ; becoming, themselves, the fathers and mothers of families, and transmitting to their children's children a portion of that happiness which they have derived from this institution. In this point of view, you will no longer consider this house as merely an asylum from present misery, but as a nursery of useful characters, as a seminary of religion and virtue, as the source of an incalculable addition to the happiness and improvement of the human race.

It is the nature of charity not to *boast* or to *envy* : but it is no less a property of it to listen with delight to the voice of sincere praise. Without, therefore, subjecting myself to the charge of boasting, or of making invidious comparison, I may affirm, that of all charitable institutions, those which regard the education and maintenance of orphan and destitute children, may justly claim the preference. God forbid that I should seek to withdraw your compassion and support from the aged and infirm, whose arm is now unstrung, and who, declining into the winter of life, no

longer display the blossoms of spring, or the fruit of autumn ! God forbid that I should endeavour to dry up the sympathetic tear which flows for the sorrows of others ; to make you deaf to the sigh of the afflicted, or render you less anxious to relieve the sick, and, by assistance and advice, to smooth the bed of death ! God forbid that what is meant to excite charity, should create a jealousy of interest, or an interference of claims among institutions which have one common object in view, the relief of distress, the alleviation of human misery, in whatever shape it appears ! My intention here is to congratulate you on the proper application of your charity ; to encourage you to proceed in the same course ; and to show that, while other charitable establishments ought not to be neglected, this requires and deserves a more than common share of your attention and support. *Many of the fair daughters of charity have done virtuously—but this excelleth them all.*

Institutions of this nature may justly be styled more *charitable* than any other, because they relieve greater wretchedness. There is not, in nature, a more striking picture of weakness and helplessness than man in the first

stage of his existence. Some animals are capable of providing for their defence and nourishment from the moment of their birth : and all, in a short space of time, are independent of foreign support. But man, like a tender and delicate flower, must be reared with infinite care and attention ; and requires for many years, the fostering hand of the parent. Happily the natural love of offspring, and the dictates of reason, combine to call forth the parental assistance. But when this support is, by the decree of heaven, removed ; when they to whom they were accustomed to look for bread, are laid in the dust ; when the unconcerned stranger, immersed in the pursuit of business or pleasure, passes by regardless of their distress : can imagination figure to itself a state more helpless and wretched ? The very cries and tears, by which alone they can express their misery, speak more forcibly in the ears of the compassionate, than the most pathetic orator can in their behalf.

And yet, such has been the situation of most of those who have been received into this house. Some of them have been found wandering in the streets, without father or mother ; without friend, except the compassion of the charita-

ble, and the benevolent providence of him who is the father of the fatherless, the shield of the stranger and the support of the orphan; scarcely acquainted with their own names; and truly able to say, *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but we have not where to lay our heads.* Others have been ushered into the acquaintance of the commissioners by the disconsolate mother, whose tears still flowed for the head and supporter of herself and her children, and who has addressed them in the piteous language of the widow of Israel to the prophet of old: *Thy servant, my husband, is dead, and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord. Thine handmaid hath nothing in the house save one pot of oil, and behold ! the creditor is come to take my two sons to be bond men.* In other cases, the children have been taken from the bedside of their aged, sick or infirm parents, who have thus been spared the heart-rending necessity of hearing them call for bread, while they had none to bestow; and who have then yielded with less reluctance to the irreversible sentence of heaven, when they knew that those whom they loved, and who would be the greatest losers by their death, were not left to wander

in the wide world, friendless and forlorn, but were provided for in this house, where there is bread enough and to spare. In short, others have been found in situations still more wretched and deplorable : the offspring of an illicit connection, ready to be sacrificed to that shame which natural feeling, as well as human opinion, have attached to every deviation from innocence ; or breathing that noxious atmosphere which infects the haunts of profligacy and impurity, and which infallibly leads those who are contaminated with it, first, to the loss of virtue and honour, next, to idleness and intemperance, and last of all, to a shameful and untimely end.

Institutions of this nature are not only more charitable in their origin, but also more varied and extensive in their objects. In common with others they have it in view to provide food and raiment, a place of habitation, health and comfort, for those who are destitute of them. And so far they deserve an equal share of praise and encouragement. But the plan of this institution extends farther, and penetrates deeper into the constitution of human nature. It is not satisfied with the removal or suspension of present misery, but provides against its return,

and lays the foundation of future comfort and happiness, by accustoming those whom it protects to habits of industry and application, and by teaching them some art or profession, in the prosecution of which they may acquire a decent and honourable subsistence. This institution, while it relieves outward indigence, likewise removes inward misery. It sees the immortal inhabitant of this earthly tabernacle stript and naked ; mangled by vice, and bleeding at every pore ; bound in fetters by ignorance, and struggling in vain for relief. Like the good Samaritan, it hastens to his assistance, breaks his chains, and removes his intellectual distress and misery. It pours the oil and wine of consolation into the wounded spirit. It causes the light of knowledge and instruction to shine into the dark and benighted mind. It feeds the hungry soul with that meat which endureth for ever. It gives to the thirsty the water springing up unto eternal life. It sows those seeds of virtue which will bring forth a rich harvest in future life, and will flourish when all human schemes and institutions shall have passed away.

Institutions of this kind are also more lasting in their effects. Other charities are confined

to the individuals who are the objects of them. This, which regards the young and rising generation, extends farther than the imagination can reach; it blesses ages and races of men which are yet unborn: in the revolutionary course of human affairs it may even prove the means of obtaining relief to the children and descendants of those who are its present supporters, and who wisely lay up, by practising pious and generous deeds, a good foundation against the time to come.

But the beneficial effects of such an institution are by no means to be considered as doubtful and remote. They are certain and immediate. By promoting the happiness of these orphans, you are in fact promoting your own interest. By saving them from want and temptation, you are depriving the scaffold of its victims; you are defending your lives from the dagger of the assassin; you are securing your house and property from the insidious attempts of the midnight robber. By a religious system of education, you improve the national character, and retard the progress of infidelity and impiety, which are the certain forerunners of the downfall of that state in which they prevail. By enuring these your adopt-

ed children to habits of activity, industry and virtue, you lay the surest foundation of national prosperity; which consists not in any local advantages of soil and climate, or in the abundance of gold and silver; but in the useful labour and active industry of the inhabitants. Natural advantages are useless when unimproved. Gold and silver may be consumed and dissipated. But active and industrious citizens are a never-failing and permanent national resource. In short, by this public mode of education, you form a host of patriots and warriors, who know no parent but their country, and owe no debt of gratitude but the advancement of the general weal. *These are our ramparts*, said an ancient statesman to one who inquired concerning the fortifications of his city, and pointing to a band of young men who were educated at the publick expense. And I have no doubt every skilful politician will agree with me in thinking that this house, appropriated as it is, to the maintenance and education of orphan boys and girls, is a more effectual defence to the state, than the bulwarks and loud-toned instruments of destruction which formerly rested on the same foundation. Of the final success

of this establishment, and of the future destinies and fortunes of these orphans, we shall predict nothing. But we know that in other countres, where such institutions have been of longer standing, some who were educated and supported at charity schools, have afterwards become commanders of fleets and armies, have risen to the higher departments of state, occupied a seat on the bench, or ministered at the altar of the Lord. The object of this institution, it is confessed, is of a humbler, though not less useful kind ; being confined chiefly to the mechanical walks of life ; and I am happy to say, that the tradesmen and artisans of this city, by their numerous applications for apprentices, show a decided preference for such as have been educated here, above those whose temper, morals and habits of application, have been destroyed by maternal indulgence.

Such being the excellent tendency and beneficial effects of institutions of this nature, it may not be improper to inquire, for a moment, into the principle from which they originate. It cannot, I think, be denied, that there exists in the original constitution of human nature, a principle or feeling of com-

passion which is excited by the sight of distress, and which prompts us to relieve the object of affliction. Whether the performance of beneficent actions is wholly disinterested, or is founded on a desire to escape from that pain which we feel at the sight of misery, or to obtain that happiness which flows from the relief of distress, is of no importance in the present inquiry. It is of more consequence to observe that this feeling, unless when strengthened by superiour motives, is but a casual and precarious instrument of good. It ceases to operate except in the immediate presence, and within the audible cry of misery. The inferences and conclusions of reason give additional energy and stability to this principle. But after all, it remained an imperfect provision for human misery, till improved and strengthened by the benevolent system of religion published to the world by Jesus Christ. Of this it formed the most essential part, being inculcated as the distinguishing mark of discipleship; being supported by motives the most powerful and sublime; and being recommended to us by a perfect model of philanthropy and compassion. In relieving the distresses of others, we only copy the example of our Great Mas-

ter, who “found the sons of men as fatherless
“ children, outcasts from paradise, in a state
“ of utter destitution ; who opened for them a
“ house of refuge, fed them with celestial food,
“ gave them the water of life to drink, clothed
“ them with the garments of salvation,” and
then inculcated on his followers, this commandment—*As I have loved you, so ought you to love one another.*

This reasoning is supported by fact. In the history of ancient times, a few solitary instances of individual benevolence may be met with ; but it is from the introduction of christianity that we date the origin of charitable establishments. Then benevolence began to operate upon a regular and systematic plan. Then the rich learnt to part with their goods for the relief of the poor. Houses were built for such as had none. Hospitals were prepared for those who wanted a physician. And the naked and hungry brethren of Jesus were clothed and fed at the common expense of that society of which they were members.

The benevolent and compassionate genius of the gospel is fully apparent in its effects. It has dispelled former ignorance and barbarity ; softened and civilized human society ; refined

and humanized the manners of men ; restrained the ravages and cruelties of war ; mitigated the severity of punishment ; diffused more extensively civil liberty and social rights ; and elevated the lower orders of men to a rank and importance in society.

But in nothing is the humane spirit of christianity more conspicuous than in improving the state of children. In the most polished nations of antiquity we observe on this subject laws the most ridiculous, and customs the most shocking to humanity. Their legislators had too much wisdom not to perceive that the youth were an important part of the community ; and that, if they did not sow in spring, they could not reap in harvest. But war and conquest constituted the policy of every state previous to the christian era ; their institutions were all calculated for this end ; and barbarous laws counteracted, and often triumphed over, the feelings of nature. At Sparta, the new-born infant was exposed to the examination of a council of men, the most inflexible in their dispositions, and the most severe in their manners ; and if it had the appearance of being weak and sickly, it was deemed unworthy to live. At Athens, it depended on

the will of a capricious and dissipated father, whether any of his children should be allowed to live; and as the state made provision for the maintenance only of those whose parents had fallen in battle, the children of the poor, or unhappy orphans, were for the most part consigned to destruction; exposed in the desert, to the uncertain affection of the wild beast, or left in the high way to the mercy of the accidental passenger. At Rome, the father's authority over his children was absolute and unlimited. They could be sold into slavery, or put to death at his pleasure.

But christianity has restored to nature its rights, and to virtue its reign. With the severe legislators of antiquity compare the mild and merciful Lawgiver of the universe; whose meekness of temper and suavity of manners were acknowledged even by his enemies; who, in all his actions, displayed the utmost affability and condescension; who, on many occasions, showed a peculiar affection, and attachment to children; who delighted to have them about his person; and who frequently exhibited them to his disciples, as fit emblems of that innocence, simplicity and docility, which ought to characterize the subjects of his

moral government. *Suffer little children, said he, to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*

Hear then the sum and conclusion of the whole matter. You, who are the generous patrons and supporters of the Orphan-house, have, by your attention to this institution, shown yourselves to be *charitable men, enlightened patriots and good christians*. The catalogue of human virtues furnishes no additional encomium.

The success of every institution depends on the wisdom and fidelity with which it is conducted. Upon this principle the Orphan-house may reasonably expect all that success of which the nature of human affairs will admit. The general management and superintendance of this institution has wisely been committed to those whom their fellow-citizens have intrusted with the security of their lives and properties; I mean the Intendant and Wardens of this city.—To you, gentlemen, I wish to address myself, with that deference and respect which are due to those whom the voice of their country has invested with authority. Our religion teaches us, that they who rule are entitled to double honour; but at the same time it exhorts ru-

lers to rule with diligence. Responsibility is invariably attached to stations of honour and trust. If nobler laurels are to be gained, greater toil is to be undergone and more danger is to be encountered. By accepting the office which you now hold, you have pledged yourselves to the community, that you will discharge its duties with diligence and fidelity.

Among the many duties attached to your station, none appears more important than a due regard to the proper management of this institution. Here you must lay the foundation of almost every other improvement in the administration of the police. The education of youth is the most interesting object which can occupy the attention of the rulers of the community. This age is the seed-time of life, and if this is neglected, the consequences will be as injurious, as if the seed-time were left out of the year. As the twig is bent, the tree is inclined. The habits and manners of the youth determine the character and conduct of the man. The instructions and exhortations of the ministers of religion will be delivered in vain unless the mind has been previously prepared for receiving them, by a virtuous education. To no purpose will you enact laws

and regulations for the maintenance of good order and sobriety, unless you encourage in the youth, habits of industry and virtue. In vain do you employ your time and money in cleaning and repairing the streets, if you do not free them from the impurities of vice, and from those disgusting sights which squalid poverty presents. You will have done but half your work, if you content yourselves with lighting the nightly passenger on his way, and still leave the minds of the lower orders of people in the darkness of ignorance. You cannot beautify and adorn the city in any way so effectually, as by introducing purity of manners, and training up these children to industry and virtue. The encouragement of this institution is not only a sublime instance of charity ; but also the truest economy, the best way of husbanding the public money. The more of it that is expended here, the less will be consumed in the poor-house. In proportion as the number of those who are benefited by this institution is increased, the expense of guarding your lives and properties will be diminished. The patriotic republicans of antiquity, lived themselves in mean and inconvenient dwellings : they displayed their splendour and magnifi-

cence in their public works, and in the temples of their gods. Show yourselves imitators worthy of them; and by your attention to institutions of publick utility, manifest your zeal for the publick good.

But while, as far as your funds will permit, you encourage and extend this institution, let it not be forgotten that you will more effectually promote the design thereof, if you can find leisure for personal attendance and inspection. This will raise in the children, a spirit of emulation, and a laudable desire to excel; because they will perceive that you take an interest in their welfare and improvement, and will find themselves distinguished according to their progress and good behaviour. This will tend, also, to excite the diligence and exertions of those servants and dependents whom you employ under you in this house. For though the exhibition of this day affords ample testimony of the fidelity and prudence of all concerned in this establishment, it cannot be denied that the present zeal can be kept up only by your constant and regular superintendence.

Above all, let it be your chief care to make a wise and discreet choice of commissioners ;

to elect to this important and honourable station, none but men of known integrity and prudence; men fearing God, and hating covetousness.

Happily the existing circumstances leave no room here, but for praise and congratulation. Were I not afraid to wound that modesty and humility which are inseparably attached to great and good characters, I would describe minutely, and you would hear with pleasure, the unwearied diligence with which the commissioners, without fee or reward, attend to the business of this institution; frequently to their own detriment, and the interruption of their private affairs. I would call upon the distressed parents to declare, how easy of access they have ever found them, and how ready to listen to their tale of woe. I would teach these children to rehearse the many instances of paternal affection, anxiety and care which they have experienced, and the many proofs of zeal for their interests, and of their readiness to give them advice, and even pecuniary assistance from their private fortune after they had left the house. In their book of laws, which is open to the inspection of every one, I would point out the salutary re-

gulations which they have established for the management of their important charge. I would lead you through the different apartments of this building, and direct your attention to the plenty which reigns there, to the economy which is practised, and to the good order which prevails among the children. I would then request you to follow me into the place of their education, and mark the proficiency many of them have made; a proficiency that might well put to the blush some who have enjoyed all the advantages which the good fortune of being descended from rich and respectable parents confers. In short, you should be present at their hours of devotion, and hear with what fervour and zeal, they, every morning and evening, offer thanks to heaven, who has raised them up in you such generous patrons and supporters. There is but one fact, however, which I shall distinguish with a particular notice, as a proof of the great attention which is paid to the health, diet and comfort of the children. Out of 183, who have been received upon this establishment since its foundation, in five years (the term of its duration) only six have died; making one in 152 annually; a circumstance,

which, considering the precarious period of life, is almost incredible, and is not to be equalled in any other climate, even the most favourable to the health and longevity of the human race.

I have only to beseech you, gentlemen, as you have hitherto deserved well of the community, not to relax in your exertions. Consider the important trust reposed in you. A higher compliment could not have been paid to the virtues either of your head or heart, than to commit to you the management of an institution which requires so much of both. I need scarcely remind you of that pleasure which you have so often felt, the pleasure of doing good, the delight of relieving the wretched. At times, indeed, you will be called to witness afflicting scenes ; but it is consoling to think, that even these have the happiest tendency to soften and improve the heart. In general, you will find in this house a pleasing retreat from the rougher labours of business and the more disagreeable duties of your station. A seminary of children, engaged in the little toils and labours suited to their years ; indulging their playful and sportive dispositions, and displaying without dissimulation or

reserve, their hopes and their fears, their loves and their hatreds, their joys and their griefs, is a delightful subject of contemplation. It is the picture of man's primeval state, and reminds us of those happy days of innocence and peace, which were spent in quietness under the paternal roof, before we were acquainted with the cares and sorrows and vices of the world. Here, seated on an eminence, you enjoy a delightful calm and serenity, while you behold the world beneath you vexed with the uproar of politicks, and wearied with the noise of folly. Other patriotick deeds may gain applause, but scenes like these administer comfort. Nay, the applause which such works of glowing charity acquire to their performers, though not so loud and noisy, is far more lasting and satisfactory. In the eye of reason, goodness ranks before greatness, and benevolent deeds before the most heroick exploits. They confer laurels which never fade, and bestow honours which no breath can blast. The erection of this edifice will be remembered to the immortal honour of its founders, when the proud monuments of human ambition and folly shall have mouldered into dust; and when the heroes and conquerours and destroyers of

the human race, who have filled the earth with widows and with orphans, shall have sunk into oblivion, or are remembered with abhorrence, your names will be hallowed by the grateful praises of the good. But this is the smallest part of your reward. Your's are the joys of self approbation. Upon you shall come the blessing of those who were ready to perish. When those years arrive, wherein the idle, who have wasted their time unprofitably, and the selfish, who have employed it solely for their own private advantage, shall say they have no pleasure, you will be able to recollect with satisfaction the several events of a life spent in promoting the glory of God, and the good of your fellow creatures. In that hour, when human strength is nought but weakness, and all the glory of man withers away as the flower of the field, your labours of love in behalf of this house, will be to you a source of support and consolation. And in that day of retribution, when the merciful shall obtain mercy, and all the frivolous and hard hearted sons of mirth shall be swept away, as the chaff before the wind, you shall hear with delight this sentence of approbation and reward: *Come ye blessed! inherit the kingdom prepared*

for you, from before the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me; I was in prison and ye came unto me. For in as much as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. For whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only, shall in no wise loose his reward.

I am now, at the conclusion of my discourse, to address myself to you for whose benefit this institution is intended. And here much might be said, were it possible to clothe my sentiments in language which your tender and uninformed minds could easily understand. But, as this is not the case with the greater part of you, I shall consider the subject with more brevity than perhaps its importance requires.

Those of you who are capable of judging and feeling at all, must, on this occasion, at the sight of your benefactors, be filled with sentiments of joy, gratitude and love. Once were you orphans and fatherless, but now these are your mothers and your fathers, your sisters and

your brethren. To them ought to be transferred that affection which would have been due to your own parents, had you been fortunate enough to have experienced their kindness. Perhaps their claim is stronger than that of any natural parent, because they were bound by no tie of affection, and they expect no recompense but a proper improvement, on your part, of the opportunities which they have put in your power. The wretchedness of your former condition, which was not at all diminished by the inability of many of you to perceive its full extent, compared with your present comfortable situation, clearly points out to you how much you owe to the generosity of the publick. Every meal you eat, every time you look to this stately building, destined for your dwelling, should call up to your view your kind supporters, and bring the tear of gratitude into your eye. You ought further to consider, that even had you been able to struggle through the various ills of poverty, want and disease, incident to your former condition, you would still have laboured under the most serious disadvantages in your progress through life. Ignorant and vicious, you could not have risen to eminence in any situation. Without friends to patronise and ad-

vise you, or to introduce you into the world, discouragement and disappointment would have attended you in every pursuit. But, by being received into this house, you have been adopted, as it were, into an honourable family. You are now the immediate children of your country, who will not fail to provide for you, if you are not wanting to yourselves. You have now friends and patrons, to whom you may look up for counsel and protection. Reflections like these are sufficient to melt the most insensible heart, and have been often found to reform the most stubborn and untractable, with whom punishment and restraint were of no avail. But how shall you evince your gratitude, and your sense of our kindness? You cannot, in person, thank every individual of your supporters; and it may never be in your power to make any return. The only way, then, in which you can show your gratitude, is by a proper behaviour, a diligent attention to your improvement while you are in this house; and a grateful recollection, after you have left it, of the kindness you have here experienced, together with a faithful discharge of the duties which may belong to your future station in life. Thus your bene-

factors will have the satisfaction to know, that their money and pains have not been bestowed in vain; and thus you will confute the common objection to such institutions, that they who have been educated in them, have generally become vicious and abandoned, when they entered into life, because they had no parents and friends to whom they were responsible for their conduct. In this way you will more effectually benefit your successors, and promote the interest of the Orphan-house, than by the most liberal contribution which success in business might enable you to make.

Upon you, my young friends, are incumbent all the duties which belong to others of the same age and sex. But I only mean to mention such as are peculiar to your situation. The first is diligence and application in whatever you are appointed to perform. Now you must lay the foundation of your success in future life. While the heart is yet tender, habits are soon formed, impressions are easily made, and lessons of wisdom sink deep into the mind. Those golden days, which you now enjoy, will soon pass away, but they will never return; and whether well or ill employed, they will leave lasting memorials

behind them. As you now sow, you will hereafter reap. Remember then that every thing depends upon your own exertions. You have no inheritance but your talents, and no friends but such as your fidelity and diligence may procure you. The child of prosperity who wastes the precious season of youth in idleness, exposes himself only to future contempt and disgrace; your idleness would draw upon you utter misery and ruin. Remember, also, that your time is not your own; that you eat the bread of others; and that you are, in a sense, the property of the publick, to whom you are responsible for every moment of your life.

To diligence you must add humility, docility and submission to your superiours. These are qualifications highly becoming in men of all ages; in youth they are peculiarly amiable and graceful: but in you, who derive every thing from the charity of others, and who, without their assistance, would have been outcasts and pests of society, they are indispensibly requisite.

Endeavour, likewise, while your minds are yet susceptible of tender impressions, to cultivate generous and charitable dispositions. *Re-*

member, that ye were bondmen in the land of Egypt, is an argument frequently addressed by the Almighty to the people of Israel, when he inculcates humanity and compassion in their dealings with the poor, or with their bond servants. And most certainly no consideration is more powerful to excite sentiments of tenderness and compassion than the actual feeling of present, or the recollection of past sufferings. Remember then, that you were once helpless, friendless and forlorn ; and, though you cannot relieve, be ever ready to compassionate others who may be in the same situation ; to weep with those who weep, and to rejoice with those who rejoice.

The choice of companions is an object of the first importance to youth ; but your situation has not left this in your power. On this subject, therefore, I have only to recommend, that you be careful to maintain harmony and concord with one another. It is comely for brethren to dwell together in unity ; and brethren, in many senses, you are—brethren in affliction, as well as by adoption into the same family. Let all wrath, contention and strife, be put away far from this house ; and let it be the mansion of peace and brotherly

love. Is not the number of your friends sufficiently small already, that you seek, by unnecessary feuds and contests, to make enemies of those whom a community of wants and sorrows, and habits of familiarity and intercourse ought to have knit to you for ever, and to have rendered through life instruments of mutual happiness and support.

On a day sacred to festivity and joy, I wished to have said nothing which might throw a cloud over the fair prospect which I have held forth to this audience. But I am particularly charged to inform you, that repeated, and I am afraid, well founded complaints have been made to the commissioners, of the improper behaviour of some of you, not only in the streets, but even in the house of God ; and thus publickly to warn the offenders, that unless reformed by the ordinary modes of correction, they will be made an awful example to the rest, will be finally expelled from this house, and their place supplied by others who shall prove more deserving of the kind support which they here receive.

In a word, my young friends, while you are careful to express your gratitude to your benefactors ; to prove by your conduct, that

you are not unworthy of their favour ; and to show to each other that kindness and humanity which your mutual wants and weakness require, forget not to lift up your minds to the Supreme Being, the author of your existence, “ the inspirer of all the love and friendship “ which have ever been shown you by others, “ the supporter of your infancy, the guide of “ your childhood, the guardian of your youth, “ and the hope of your coming years.” Let it be the first object of all your wishes and endeavours to obtain his favour ; and know, for your encouragement, that they who seek him early shall find him. Without the blessing and protection of the Almighty, all hope of happiness and success in life were vain : possessed of these, you have the best reason for trust and confidence. His arm can give strength to the weak. His grace will enable you to resist every temptation. His comforts will delight your souls in the day of adversity and distress.

Let us, therefore, unite, with one heart and with one voice, in offering thanks and praise to him who hath hitherto helped us ; and in imploring his future blessing and protection to this institution, without which all our endeavours will be ineffectual.

PRAYER.

GOD of infinite perfection ! Father of all mercy ! Fountain of every good word and work ! Protector of the helpless ! and Rewarder of all virtuous deeds ! with humility and reverence we now present ourselves before thee, bringing with us these sons and daughters of affliction, and desirous to place them under thy almighty protection. Do thou, who hast set thy glory above the heavens, and who out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast ordained strength, hear with acceptance the prayer and praise which are addressed to thee from this place.

While angels and archangels, and the spirits of the just, behold thy perfections and glory unveiled, we contemplate thee only in thy works. But there we see marks of regularity and order which proclaim that thou art wise : There we perceive the sources of enjoyment scattered with a profusion which announces thy goodness and love. If we behold suffering and sorrow at times pervading thy universe, we know that thou never afflictest

thy children but for their moral discipline and improvement in virtue, which is the ultimate and leading object of thy administration. When we consider our own nature and state, we lament our degraded condition; but when we open that sacred volume which thou hast given to guide us into the way of truth, we contemplate with astonishment and love that stupendous scheme of mercy which thou hast executed through thy Son for repairing the ruins of our fall, and restoring our nature to its primitive virtue and happiness.

O thou inexhaustible source of every good and perfect gift! send thy almighty grace into our hearts, and form in us thy own image. Enable us to co-operate with thee in that great plan, which thou art carrying on from age to age, for counteracting the fatal effects of that disorder which sin has introduced into the moral system. Implant within us the seeds of every virtue which is ornamental to our nature, and well pleasing in thy sight. Inspire us with a principle of universal benevolence. Breathe into our souls that spirit of charity which is the bond of perfection. May we feel that generous sympathy, which weeps with those who weep, and rejoices with those who

rejoice. Teach us that candour which thinketh no evil. As we expect mercy from thee, may we forgive our neighbour the wrongs which he has done us. As we hope for divine succour in the day of distress, may we be ever ready to relieve and assist the wretched.

Father Almighty! without whose assistance and protection nothing can prosper, we beseech thee to regard with favour this institution: may it effectually answer the great design of its establishment, and, in every case, may human compassion prove a remedy for human misery.

Father of the fatherless! be gracious to these orphans who have no friend and protector but thee. O merciful and compassionate Shepherd of Israel! who carriest the lambs in thy arms, and gently leadest such as are with young, defend this tender flock from evil. Preserve them in the path of righteousness, innocence and peace. Grant that they may make due proficiency in the several branches of education allotted to them. Inspire them with gratitude and love to their benefactors, but especially to thee, their greatest benefactor and friend. Grant that they may live in harmony and concord with one another; and, when they leave

this place, may they, by their conduct, do honour to themselves, and prove a blessing to their country.

Bless with thy almighty patronage every seminary of learning; and render effectual the exertions of parents, guardians and teachers, in behalf of the young and rising generation.

Pour down thy choisest blessings on the friends and supporters of this institution. May they experience that he who giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord; and though he may seem to cast away his bread as it were upon the waters, he shall find it after many days. Grant that all who are concerned in this institution may discharge, with fidelity and diligence, the various duties of their stations; and may, in every thing, look up to thee who art the friend of the poor, and the protector of the oppressed!

Ruler of the Universe! we offer up our earnest supplications in behalf of these lands wherein we live. Bless the United States of America; and grant that peace, happiness and prosperity may ever attend them. May we put a due value on the inestimable blessings of civil and religious liberty which we enjoy;

may we be grateful to thee, the authour of them : and may we transmit them pure and unimpaired to the latest generations.

Pour down thy blessings on thy servant the president of the United States. Protect his person, prolong his life, and guide his counsels, that his government may be a blessing to those over whom he is placed.

We pray for all governours, judges and rulers, more particularly, the governour of this state, and the magistrates of this city. Teach them to rule in thy fear, and to thy glory ; employing the power with which they are intrusted, as a terrour to evil-doers, and as an encouragement and protection to those who do well.

Bless, O God ! this city and all its inhabitants. Let not our sins and follies provoke thee to visit us in wrath. Spare thy destroying sword ; and restore us to our wonted health and prosperity.

Let not the Lord be angry, and we will yet further supplicate for the whole human race, the distressed and fallen family of mankind. See, O God ! the afflictions of the afflicted ! May the sigh of the prisoner come up before thee. Look down with compassion on the

sufferings of the just. Bend thine ear to the cry of the miserable. O, may thy kingdom come! May thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven! May ignorance, superstition, tyranny, bigotry and wrath cease for ever! May the mild genius of the gospel appear in the lives of its professors! May virtue again shine forth as in the days of old, and convert these abodes of sin and misery into mansions of holiness and peace!

May thy name be hallowed and thy glory advanced by all thy rational and moral offspring throughout thy vast universe, henceforth, even for ever more! AMEN.

FINIS.











